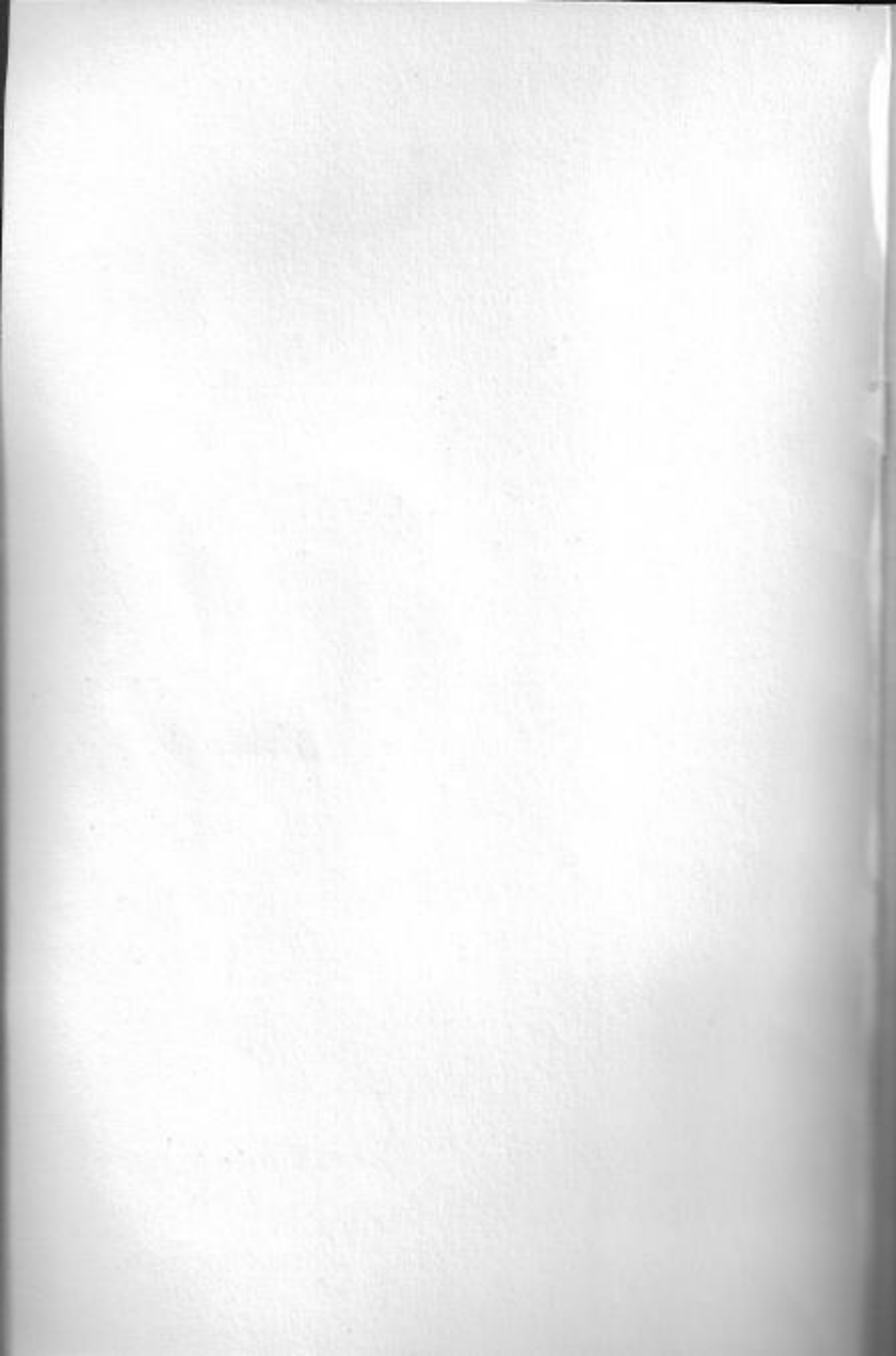


Old St. Mary's

The Biography of  
The Church of The Holy Name of Mary  
Almonte, Ontario



# Old St. Mary's

A short biography of  
The Church Of The Holy Name of Mary, Almonte, Ont.



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**This book is dedicated to:**

"The gentle hands that rocked our cradles,  
The iron hands that turned the stubborn sod;  
The skilled hands that built this building,  
And the sure hands that directed us to God.



**His Holiness, Pope Paul VI  
and  
Joseph Aurelle Plourde,  
Bishop of Ottawa.**

### Foreword To The Reader

When you are ploughing a field, you can look back at the day's end, and with your eye measure the day's work from the darker hue of the new-turned soil. Tomorrow it will be blended with yesterday's work. It is the nature of man to look back on his successes and failures. But he must not dwell too long on either. Life moves on and each man is its mover.

There are many dates in the history of old St. Mary's that we could use as a marker - a place to pause and look back from. This is a good year. One hundred years ago this Christmas Eve of 1969, a group of grateful men, women and children knelt on wooden floors, between the still damp walls of unfaced stone and gave thanks. They gave thanks to their God, thanks to His Son, and thanks to the Holy Spirit that sustains us in times of trial and uncertainty. They had, in the face of adversity, built a noble church of stone in the year just past. They had built well, as we who inherit their handiwork can attest.

It has been a great pleasure to work with St. Mary's centennial committee and to prepare this little book for them. I am grateful to the committee, and all the people of this parish for their help and encouragement during the months of research and writing. I thank especially the older generation for reaching back into their memories to help me, and Father John O'Donnell for the use of church records. I send a note of thanks to people in far parishes who sent information from their records and to newspapers and long dead writers who witnessed the passing scene in their day.

James McNeill.

The Land

The People

A Giant in the Land

In the Diocese of Ottawa

Old St. Mary's

The Stone Church

The Schools of St. Mary's

The Early Libraries

The Resting Places

The Catholic Women's League

The Shepherds of St. Mary's

1. Rt. Rev. John McDonald, V.G.	1823—1838
2. Very Rev. John Hugh McDonaugh, V.G.	1838—1845
3. Rev. Terrance Smith	1845—1846
4. Rev. Peter O'Connell	1846—1848
5. Rev. Edward Vaughan	1848—1868
6. Rev. A. O'Malley	1868—1872
7. Rev. Dr. Remi Faure	1872—1875
8. Rev. E.J.J. Stenson	1875—1878
9. Rev. John F. Coffey	1878—1881
10. Rev. B. Casey	1881—1882
11. Very Rev. Canon Declan F. Foley	1882—1903
12. Rev. John Harkin	1903—1911
13. Most Rev. Dr. John T. McNally	1911—1913
14. Msgr. Walter E. Cavanagh	1913—1931
15. Rev. George W. O'Toole	1931—1937
16. Very Rev. Canon John Cunningham	1937—1952
17. Rev. W. Maurice Egan	1953—1959
18. Rev. Francis French	1959—1966
19. Rev. John O'Donnell	1966—1969
20. Rev. Edward Lunney	1969—

On the 31st day of May, 1819, John Ferguson, on behalf of King George III and the "Principal Men of the Mississagua Nation" representing the two hundred and fifty seven Indians who normally inhabited this area, set their marks and seals on a Provisional Agreement conveying the 2,748,000 acres of the Johnstown District to "His Majesty, His heirs and successors forever". In return they were to receive the sum of 642 pounds, 10 shillings in Province currency "yearly and every year forever" in goods at the Montreal price. *(As decimal currency was being considered at this time the rate was also calculated at \$10.00 per head.)*

The surrender agreement, re-written with considerable legal flourish, was ratified on November 28, 1822, with the Deputy Superintendent General of Indian Affairs in the Province of Upper Canada now acting for the new King, George IV. A map was attached to this confirming agreement, showing the boundaries of the territory. This document also restated the amount to be paid the Mississagua Nation for the land. It would now be paid to them and their posterity forever "provided the number of annuitants at any time should not exceed two hundred and fifty seven, being the number of persons then composing the said Nation claiming and inhabiting the said tract of land." In 1890 the original map was reproduced on a reduced scale and is published here to show the area ceded. No towns or roads, marked the surface of unbroken woods. We can get our bearings from where the Madawaska and Mississippi flow into the Ottawa.

One may wonder why the names of military men are affixed to this transfer of land, when it was not a peace treaty but a conveyance of land. The answer is to be found in early English relations with the Indians in North America. They had not come as conquerors. The instructions of Charles II in 1670 and again confirmed by Royal Proclamation in 1763, stated that justice must be done to the original inhabitants. When land was acquired for settlement, legal surrender of it had to be obtained before a title could be issued to white settlers. Indians were sought as allies in the early colonial wars, and relations with them were, quite naturally, the responsibility of the Military. This situation remained until 1830.





### **The Land and the People**

The depression and disorganization of labour that followed in the train of the Napoleonic Wars spurred the emigration of Scottish and Irish labourers and farm tenants to British North America. We should look briefly at this great movement of people and how their religious needs resulted in the establishing of our parish. For these paragraphs I have read widely, but in place or footnotes, let me offer thanks to the National Archives in Ottawa, the University of Toronto Library, the Canadian Historical Journal and to the work of Miss Helen I. Cowan "British Emigration to British North America 1783-1837". In this book, published in 1928, she quotes from the official correspondence preserved in the old Colonial Department records in London.

The beginning of the movement was the establishment of Military Settlements along a safe route above the St. Lawrence river, from Montreal to Kingston after the War of 1812. This settlement system was directed from 1815 to 1821 by Major Gen. Sir Sidney Beckwith, Quartermaster-General of the forces. Although the management and accommodation of the settlers (mostly disbanded soldiers and their families at first) was under the Military Department with headquarters in Quebec City, the Council of Upper Canada reserved for itself all matters pertaining to the allotment of land. There was some delay in the ultimate settlement of our area, with emigrants waiting in idleness until the new townships of Bathurst, Drummond and Beckwith were surveyed. By October, 1816, about fourteen hundred settlers occupied the new townships and most had erected log shelters and had about ten acres cleared. The settlement was on its way, but it had been an expensive venture for those days of tight money and the whole expense came out of the military chest. Changes were made in Britain and afterward all emigration came under the Colonial Department in London. There was considerable emigration in 1818 of Scots who removed here after much suffering and hardship and a stop-over (partly due to the new policy) in Prince Edward Island. It was this group that did the first clearing in Ramsey Township.



The great depression severely taxed the woolen industry in Scotland. Wages dropped from a high of 25 shillings a week in 1805 to five shillings in 1819. Thousands were unemployed, starvation a real threat and labour unrest on the point of riot. In an "appeal to Public Feeling" the weavers put forward a bold demand in the *Caledonia Mercury* on June 5, 1819. They petitioned their Prince and Parliament to "have us conveyed to Canada or some of the Northern Colonies." During the winter of 1819-20 Emigration societies were formed among the weavers in Glasgow, Hamilton and Paisley and in the villages of Lanark. They petitioned the Colonial Office for aid and their appeals were heard in high places. Preparations for emigration were co-ordinated by Kirkman Finlay, a Member of Parliament and the first group of twelve hundred men, women and children sailed from Glasgow in June and July, 1820.

A second group of eighteen hundred and eighty three souls from Lanark, Dumbarton, Stirling, Clackmannan and Linlithgow arrived in Quebec City in June 1821. The hardships they endured in reaching Prescott, then a village of one thousand, is told in their letters home. At Prescott their baggage was loaded on wagons and the able bodied of all ages walked behind them to Perth, the heart of the military settlements. Perth was then four years old, a thriving town of two churches, two bakers, three smiths, assorted stores and a post office. It was the headquarters of the Quartermaster-General's Department, under the command of Lt. Col. Cockburn who was to take care of them. The pioneers' destination, however, lay fourteen miles away, through solid woods to the banks of the Clyde where a site had been chosen for New Lanark. During the summer fifteen hundred men, women and children had been settled, but this second group reached the site to find much of the good land had been pre-empted by the first. Many were forced to settle a distance from the townsite on land that was rocky and swampy.

It seems careful watch was kept of the expenses, and Lt. Col. Cockburn reported in May, 1821 that he had expended £11,832 sterling, eleven shillings and seven pence, or, it cost about 15 to 16 pounds to settle a man and his family on one hundred acres of ground. This amount included opening a road, surveys, buildings and provisions as well as transportation from Quebec to the settlement. By 1829 the accumulated costs had reached £22,000 sterling. These figures of course were for the Treasury Board in England, because even in 1827 little money was in circulation beyond the village of Perth. The settler measured his success in the log home he built and his few bushels of grain growing between the stumps that indicated his winter's flour. Their hardships in a strange land were offset by the knowledge that they were free men, masters of their land and owing nothing to the laird. There were many catholics among the weavers of West Scotland and the church came with them, especially with the first groups who had settled in Glengarry in 1804. They still had difficulties and all did not stay on their land, but with experience moved on to better spots. In some cases the settler did not get clear title to his holdings until 1836, when the Treasury decided it was not the policy of His Majesty's Government to collect all the advances made to the settlers in the form of sustenance and implements.

The next influx of assisted Emigrants were the Irish in 1823. Ireland was in a tragic state. Unemployment, evicted families and civil dis-order plagued the whole land. Starvation and disease, religious intolerance and riot, locked the land in an embrace of death. In 1823 three men met to find a solution to the problem of unemployment - Sir Robert P  el of the Home Office, Henry Goulburn, an under-secretary in the Colonial Department, and Sir Robert J. Wilmot Horton. When they finished their deliberations they had drawn up a plan for Irish emigration that was to have a long lasting effect on our parish, Ramsey township and many other parts of Canada.

The area of Ireland from which the first migrants were to be chosen was very disturbed, having been the scene of recent armed insurrection. Peter Robinson, a Canadian by birth, and veteran of the 1812 war, was appointed to superintend the emigration scheme. He arrived in Fermoy, County Cork and met with the land-owners, Lord Kingston, Lord Doneraile and lesser ones. These gentlemen, although in agreement with any plan that would relieve them of troublesome subjects, wished to have a say in the selection because they feared that "the most industrious and best disposed" would leave. In the towns of Fermoy, Ballyhooly, Mallow, Newmarket, Charleville, Killydorrery, Doneraile and Killworth, crowds gathered to hear Robinson read the terms of the scheme. . . . five hundred people would be selected, all heads of families must be under forty-five years of age. . . . They would be given free passage to Canada and a conveyance of land free of expense, provisions would be provided during the passage and for the first year on the land. Seventy acres per family with an additional thirty acre pre-emption reserved adjoining it, all of course subject to a residence and improvement clause. Utensils and bedding would be provided. The appeal had an overwhelming effect and it was difficult to select the first five hundred souls from the great number who placed their names on the emigration lists.

Of course there was some suspicion and it was rumoured that it was a scheme to get the Irish out of their country faster than the Insurrection Act could exile them. In Peter Robinson's correspondence it gives some hint of the questions he was asked: *Was Mr. Robinson an American? Were there priests in the settlement? Were there enough potatoes?*

Soon all were ready, meagre possessions sold or given away, and farewells said forever to relatives. A great throng escorted the emigrants from their homes. The ships *Hebe* and *Stakesby* stood out from Cork on July 8, 1823. Five hundred and sixty seven men, women and children filled every inch of accommodation, and many a volunteer still waited on the docks, hoping there might be a place.

It was a long journey and for most, the first by sea and the first time away from their home villages. Records say eight children and one woman died at sea before the two ships dropped anchor at Quebec on the last day of September, 1823. Robinson was with them when they unloaded directly from the ships into waiting steamboats in the river and proceeded to Montreal. From Montreal, without a stop or a desertion, they walked on foot or sat

on the baggage wagons to Lachine. After two days rest, they loaded themselves and their worldly bundles into large river boats. They had two Canadians for guides, but the men made up the crews themselves. Unskilled rivermen or not, they reached Prescott on October 15th. At Prescott the Quartermaster's Department issued one month's food ration to each settler, and on the 18th they began their journey across country to Ramsey. They made it in four days.

A few settlers from Glasgow and a party of discharged soldiers had cleared some land in 1820 and there were some military stores which Robinson had prior permission to use. There was no shelter of any kind until a log communal shelter was built. The Irish, at the beginning, were unskilled with the axe. Winter was coming, so they paid the older settlers to help them. Optimism was high. There was excitement in choosing land that was to be their own. One settler, John Mara, wrote that his grant was "as good as any land in the country" and "our superintendent, Mr. Robinson, is behaving as humane and gentlemanly as any man in the world. He has served us out with beds and blankets, all kinds of carpenter's tools, farming utensils and a cow to the head of every family next spring! Peter Robinson returned to the United Kingdom to continue his colonising work with great success.

The fact that all men are not farmers may be best illustrated by a survey made in Ramsey in 1825. Of the original five hundred and sixty seven souls, four hundred and fourteen were on their land. A total of sixty two farmsteads were vacant, eight by death, nine went to the United States, thirty-two left for other jobs in Canada, one returned to Ireland and twelve had left without permission from Robinson and their fate was unknown. A copy of an old letter, long in the possession of Hal Kirland of Almonte, reveals something of the hopeful courage of those times. . . .

Ramsay, Lot 10, 3rd Con., Sept. 16, 1825,

To Hon. Peter Robinson, Superintendent of  
Irish Emigrants, York or elsewhere.

*Honoured Sir: We all, young and old, congratulate you on your safe arrival with all those under your patronage. I expected you would be down before this time. . . . We are all doing very well, thank God, and enjoy good health. My daughter is married to an old settler in Lanark, but we have got a young son as an increase which makes up the number. We had a good crop last year out of which we sold Mr. Bane six barrels of flour; but my eldest daughter's illness together with buying clothes and necessities for the winter prevented me from buying a yoke of oxen which are indispensably necessary on a farm. We have a good crop this year also, out of which I expect I can sell about twenty-four barrels of flour and one hundred bushels of potatoes; But as I have no market convenient nor oxen to convey it where there is a market, I don't know how to manage. Now as there are some of your late settlers convenient to me who will no doubt be supplied with rations, if you would be so good as to cause the above mentioned flour and potatoes to be bought for them of me, it would favour me to the extreme and enable me to buy a yoke of oxen and other necessities.*

*My son-in-law, Michael Foley, who you may recollect gave you some trifling money for his father and mother which he expected would come out under your banner. (You will recollect on the day you were going away, at Col. Powell's, Perth). He has got no account from them this year, and as they did not come out with you he is uneasy to know whether they presented themselves, or perhaps you might have a letter from them. If convenient send a few lines in answer to me. You may direct to Rev. John McDonald for Michael Corkery, or to Mr. Ben Delisle.*

Your obedient servant, Michael Corkery.

People continued to come for many years, not only to here, but all parts of Upper Canada. Indeed, they come and are welcomed to this very day, and from here the descendants of the first group may be found from one end of our country to the other.



## **The Infant Parish**

To build a church you need people and now that we have looked briefly to their coming, let us get on with the story of St. Mary's. As the trees were being cleared away, rude log houses erected, fields cleared and barns built, the religious needs of the settler were not forgotten. Through the woods from Perth walked the holy priest, Father John Macdonald. No stranger to the wilderness, his parish was all of Lanark County. He visited, counseled and encouraged. He heard confessions and said mass wherever he could gather a few neighbours together. There is a record of mass being celebrated in the homes of David Dowling, Timothy O'Brien, Patrick Corkery and William Slattery. Mr. Slattery lived to see the full development of the promise of the early 1820's. He died in the spring of 1885, full of honoured years and a true friend of St. Mary's in all the stages of her first century of development. Father Macdonald welcomed the Irish emigrant as he had welcomed the Scots. More will be said of him in the chapter on the Shepherds of St. Mary's. He remained through the rugged first years until 1838.

In these early days the centre of the settlement was not yet called Almonte and it had little to offer in the way of civilized amenities. But it had two services essential to a growing farm community. It had a sawmill with no lack of raw material to feed it and it boasted a grist mill. Like many a future town in Ontario the site was dictated by an abundance of water-power.

Among the first pioneers was Daniel Sheppard who built a saw mill in 1819 on a two hundred acre plot awarded him by the government for that purpose. Sheppard's property was bought out by Daniel Shipman and his father-in-law in 1820. Mr. Shipman and his wife built a log house, later replaced by a stone dwelling that most of us know now as Rooney's Pool Hall. In 1821 Daniel Shipman erected a sawmill to replace the original which was destroyed by fire. In 1822 he built a grist mill to grind the grain from the new fields. Sheppard's Falls thus became Shipman's Falls or Shipman's Mills. More names were to come - Ballygiblin, Ramsayville, Waterford, Victoriaville and finally in 1856 the name Almonte was chosen. The famous Mexican general and diplomat who said "No" to the Yankees was probably never aware that his name graces our town. The name did much to unify the population and the town grew rapidly to incorporation in 1870.

## A Giant in the Land.

It is right that this short history of St. Mary's should pay tribute to her first Bishop, Alexander Macdonell, for his story is the early history of the Church in Ontario. He was born at Inchlaggan, Glengarry, Scotland and there is some confusion whether it was in 1760 or 1762. He was educated in the Scottish College in France and at the Scots College at Valladolid in Spain. He was ordained in Spain on Feb. 16th, 1787 and returned as a missionary priest to serve the scattered Catholics in the hills of Lochaber. At this time there were many homeless highlanders because the land was being enclosed for sheep raising and the landowners evicted their tenants. Many went to the industrial centres where they lived in abject poverty and misery. Alexander Macdonell went to them in Glasgow. Most were Roman Catholics and there were no churches in the city as all of them had been destroyed by mobs some years before. They could not speak the language and they had no trades other than farming or soldiering. Their priest found work for them as weavers and when asked to do so, raised a regiment of Fencibles for Army service. He was their chaplain, the first Catholic chaplain appointed in the British Army since the Reformation. With the Peace of Amiens in 1802 the regiment was disbanded but their chaplain made arrangements for them to come to Canada with their families and settle in Glengarry in Upper Canada. They were given grants of land according to their military ranks and Alexander Macdonell received a grant as well. He built a grist mill for them. It was then known as Priest's Mills but now is Alexandria. The spiritual needs and the temporal wants of his people were his constant concern.

He was a pastor of St. Raphaels when appointed Vicar General for Upper Canada by the Bishop of Quebec. When Upper Canada was erected into a Bishopric by Leo XII on Feb. 14, 1826, Alexander Macdonell was appointed Bishop under the title of Bishop of Rhesina. The Home authorities in those days did not wish to have Catholic Bishops recognized as Titulars. His appointment did however, have the blessing of the British Government and his episcopal ring, a beautiful amethyst surrounded by diamonds, was the personal gift of King George IV. His diocese was Kingston but it included all of present day Ontario.

He was a man of imposing strength and stood six foot, four inches tall. He was a born leader of men, had great personal courage and inspired confidence in everyone who knew him. It is not unnatural that he was appointed a member of the House of Assembly of Upper Canada. I will quote from a letter he wrote to Sir Francis Bond Head in 1836 in reply to a political attack made on him by William Lyon Mackenzie. It will give some idea of the immense burden he shouldered in his first thirty years in Canada: . . . . *"Upon entering upon my pastoral duties, I had the whole of the province in charge, and without any assistance for the space of ten years. During that period I had to travel from Lake Superior to the province line of Lower Canada, carrying the sacred vestments, sometimes on horseback, sometimes on my back and sometimes in Indian birch canoes, living with Indians, without any other shelter or comfort but what their fires and their fares and the*

*branches of the trees afforded, crossing the great lakes and rivers, and even descending the rapids of the St. Lawrence in their dangerous and wretched craft. Nor were the hardships and privations which I endured among the new settlers and emigrants less than those I had to encounter among the Indians themselves, in their miserable shanties, exposed on all sides to the weather and destitute of every comfort. In this way I have been spending my time and my health year after year since I have been in Upper Canada, and not clinging to a seat in the Legislative Council and devoting my time to political strife, as my accusers are pleased to assert. The erection of five-and-thirty churches and chapels, great and small, although many of them are in an unfinished state, built by my exertion, and the zealous services of two-and-twenty clergymen, the major part of whom have been educated at my own expense, afford a substantial proof that I have not neglected my spiritual functions, nor the care of the souls under my charge; and if that be not sufficient, I can produce satisfactory documents to prove that I have expended, since I have been in this province, no less than thirteen thousand pounds of my own private means, besides what I received from other quarters, in building churches, chapels, presbyteries and school houses, in rearing young men for the church and in promoting general education."*

In the story of Kingston there are many references to the famous Bishop and the record of his services to Canada in the War of 1812 is one of high honour. The anecdotes told about him and those he told himself are legion. In the cause of education, he went to the British Isles to raise money for the building of Regiopolis College in August 1839. After visiting England and Ireland he went to Scotland to discuss further emigration to Canada. While travelling from Port Patrick to Dumfries, a distance of eighty miles, he insisted on remaining outside with the driver because the stagecoach was crowded. He caught a severe cold, but said Mass on his arrival. He developed pneumonia and in two days was dead. His remains were taken to Edinburgh and after a magnificent funeral were deposited in St. Margaret's Convent Chapel. The news of his death reached Kingston on Passion Sunday, 1840. His successor, Bishop Remi Gaulin sang a solemn Requiem High Mass, which was attended by government and civic leaders of the Province. In 1861 his remains were brought home to Canada and placed in the Cathedral in Kingston. In 1843 the Highland Society of Canada erected a monument to his memory at St. Raphael's with the inscription "Though dead, he still lives in the hearts of his countrymen."



## In the Diocese of Ottawa

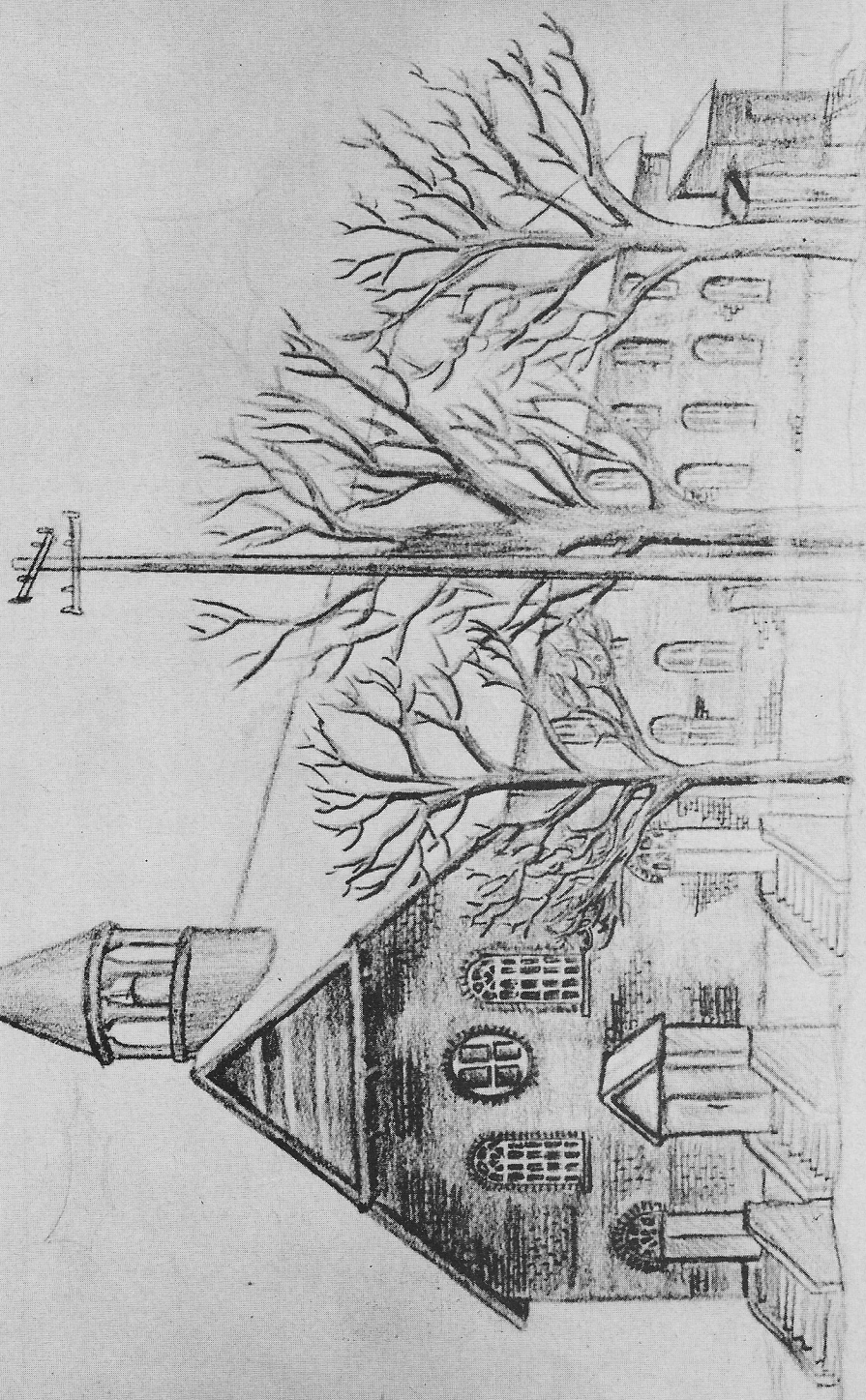
The Catholics in the Ottawa Valley were increasing rapidly on both sides of the mighty river and around the future capital city of Canada. In view of the increased number of people and the fact that many of them were French, His Holiness Pius IX, in the year 1847 established the Diocese of Bytown and called the Rev. Joseph Bruno Guigues, then at Montreal and a distinguished member of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate to be the first Bishop. Father Guigues was born in Gap, the principal town in the Hautes Alpes of France on August 25, 1805. After he heard of his appointment he immersed himself in the English language so as to better serve his flock. On July 28, 1848, he was consecrated in Bytown by Bishop Remi Gaulin of Kingston, whom we mentioned earlier.

His years as Bishop were fruitful ones. Among his first acts was to found Ottawa College (now the University of Ottawa) with Father Tabaret as its first Rector. In the beginning the Bishop had but fifteen priests to cover his vast area, but his Pastoral visits were many. New parishes sprang up, educational facilities were built, homes for the aged and orphaned and hospitals for the sick were built in Bytown before that city was raised to the dignity of capital of Canada.

He was called home to Glory on Feb. 9, 1874. In the city the cathedral bells tolled, and throughout his vineyard they tolled above the new churches he had built in his quarter of a century as Bishop. From an article written about him at the time of his death we read the following tribute; *"Truly our zealous bishop had gone about doing good. Those who listened to his loving and paternal discourse in his numerous pastoral visits could not but feel that they came from his heart, that they were the words of an apostle."*

Funeral orations were delivered by Bishop Fabre of Montreal and Bishop Wodhams of Ogdensburg. Almonte was represented at the services by our Parish Priest, Rev. Dr. R. Faure. For several months the Diocese was without a bishop but on the 28th of October, 1874 the Parish Priest at St. Eugene was consecrated in the Cathedral of Ottawa. Thomas Duhamel was the son of Francois Duhamel and Marie Joseph Audet-Lapointe and was born in Contrecoeur, Quebec in 1841. He was educated in Ottawa and was ordained a priest by Bishop Guigues on December 19th, 1863. He was curate at Buckingham before becoming the second parish priest at St. Eugene in Aug. 1864. He succeeded Fr. J.J. Collins who became Parish Priest at Pakenham that year.

Perky  
Tweed  
Feb. 1979



OLD ST. MARY'S

## THE WOODEN CHURCH

About the year 1842, Father John Hugh McDonough, parish priest of Perth and caring for the needs of Ramsey in the footsteps of Father John Macdonald, put before his scattered flock the idea of building their own church, to serve not only the town, but the townships of Ramsey, Darling and Lavant. Father McDonough had been given a gift of land by Daniel Shipman consisting of one and a half acres. Part of the land was already in use as a cemetery.

His appeal was soon turned to action and the first church in the growing little town was commenced. It was 40 by 60 feet - a frame structure, clap-boarded outside and lathed and plastered inside. The building of the church and its later repairs are described in the biography of Father McDonough, but some idea of its appearance is presented in the sketch given here. It is a pencil drawing and bears the artists' name and the date - 1849. The repairs it so badly needed were made in the 1850's.

It was on Christmas night, 1868, that flames were seen leaping from the windows of the church. Fire fighting methods were very poor in those days, and in spite of the exertions of the towns citizens, the church was reduced to ashes. Only a few stations of the cross were saved. Vestments, ornaments and books were all destroyed. Henry Stafford, searching through the ashes recovered the altar stone. The church was insured by the Beaver Company of Toronto and the sum of \$1,514.66 was promptly paid. It was little to compensate for the spiritual or material loss.

After 26 years of service, the old church was now a memory. It was time to build again, to build well, to build of stone, Lanark County stone.

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A pencil drawing made in 1849 showing the wooden church of St. Mary's, destroyed by fire on Christmas Day, 1868. The repair work which is obvious in the drawing, was done in 1852.





St. Mary's Church in 1892.

## The Stone Church

The Rev. Father O'Malley of Huntley learned with sorrow that his mission church in Almonte had burned to the ground on Christmas day. He immediately sought to console his flock and to find a place for them to have mass until a new building could be erected. He secured the rent of Reilly's Hall (later used as a sample room by salesmen) for holding Sunday services and meetings and this is where they met during the year of 1869. Some filled with hope remarked: "*On Christmas day we must have our new church up and have mass in it*". To fulfill this desire prompt action followed.

A meeting was convened to elect a building committee on the 6th of January. Nine parishioners were elected - Isaiah McKean, Henry Stafford, Edward Dowling, John Vaughan, Michael Foley, William Reardon, Robert O'Brien, John O'Reilly, and Patrick Reilly. Henry Stafford was treasurer and John O'Reilly, secretary. Under the guidance of their pastor and the enthusiasm of these earnest men, the clouds of difficulty vanished.

A subscription list was opened and the people hastened to put down their names. Many subscribed \$100.00, others \$80, \$60, \$50, etc. Many of the subscriptions were turned into notes receivable, payable within a period of time and they were discounted for operating cash. The winter months were taken advantage of for drawing stone and other material. A number of "bees" were organized and those who could supplied their own labour as well as sleighs and horses. Others offered their sleighs and horses to those who owned none. The first load of stone was piled on the site by Edward Dowling and the first load of mortar sand by Patrick Gleeson.

Meetings were held to decide the proportions of the new church building. They knew it might take several years to complete the building properly and that the mission was growing and time might demand additions to it. It was decided by the committee with the advice of Fr. O'Malley, to make it wider by ten feet than the previous church. The size agreed upon was ninety by fifty feet with a tower of sixteen by fifteen feet. Mr. Andrew Bell was appointed architect to draw up plans and tenders were advertised in the *Almonte Gazette*, the *Carleton Place Herald*, *Ottawa Times*, *Brockville Recorder* and *Perth Courier*. At a meeting held on the 27th of April, 1869, for opening the five tenders received, the contract was awarded to the firms of Messrs. William Willoughby and Oakley. The work of the building was soon begun, but money was still a problem. Henry Stafford and Patrick Reilly went to the Protestants of Ramsey and were generously received. They secured a substantial amount from them. Mr. Edward Dowling went to Ottawa, now the capital of our two year old country. From several members of Parliament and private individuals a substantial amount was pledged and received. William Madden mortgaged his farm and home for \$2000.00 to get the work started and for many years his family occupied the front pew on the right hand side.

On the Feast of Sts. Peter and Paul, the 29th of June, 1869, the cornerstone was laid with pomp and ceremony. It was an historic date, not only for our parish, but for the whole church. Eight hundred bishops were gathered in Rome for the great Vatican Council. Our Bishop, his Lordship Bishop Guigues was in Rome too, but he had authorized Father O'Malley to perform the ceremony. It was an immense crowd for those days that gathered to witness the ceremony. They were reminded that Our Lord is the Cornerstone not only of the building but of the whole church. Rev. Father O'Brien of Brockville (afterwards Bishop of Kingston) preached the sermon. In the cavity of the stone was placed a document giving the particulars of the building, the names of friends and clergy, the names of reigning king and pontiff, the name of the bishop and the Governor-general. The religious paper "True Witness" and the Almonte Gazette of the week, and the coins of the country were sealed in for future historians to read or anthropologists to discover. A collection was taken up and the amount of money received was a very handsome one.

Building continued through the summer and autumn under James Moore, the master mason, and although scaffolding was still in place, the roof was on and the dream of the year was realized when Mass was celebrated in the new church, the pews were temporary, and wood burning heaters fought the chill of the damp mortar. Much remained to be done, but the spirit was there and Christ again had His home among His people.

#### **Almonte becomes a Parish**

It was during the course of building our present church that Almonte became a parish. In July 1872, His Lordship Bishop Guigues, seeing the number of Catholics rapidly increasing and in accordance with the wishes of the generous parishioners, resolved to elevate it to a parish. The first resident priest was Rev. Dr. Faure, "a young and zealous" man from France. The first act in the register of the new parish is dated July 21, 1872.

The church was not finished on the inside and the presbytery was not built. A house was rented for him. At a meeting of the congregation on Feb. 23, 1873, it was decided to build both a sacristy for the church and a house for the priest. It was a bold venture for money was still scarce, but it was thought that the church could not be considered finished without a sacristy. The sacristy was to be thirty by twenty feet. The presbytery was to be of gothic style to match and measure thirty by forty feet, with a stone kitchen of twenty be eighteen feet. Both tenders were let at once to the same builder - O'Brien and Driscoll, with the stipulation that the work was to be completed by November the same year. Fr. Faure moved into the new house on Dec. 15, 1873. Furnishings were scant, but this need was soon filled by the ladies of the parish. A bazaar was held to raise the money and in January, 1874 a series of concerts completed the work. In the spring of 1874 the grounds were laid out and trees planted along the carriage lane to Bridge Street. Mr. Arnoldi, an Italian decorator, was retained to assist and direct the finishing of the interior of the church. This work was completed in 1875, and



included some structural change to the sacristy. The ceiling, we read in contemporary accounts "*was beautifully finished in wood paneling, the plastering was superior in workmanship. The high altar was built of marble, presenting a very striking appearance.*" Opposed to the high altar, a large pipe organ, manufactured by Warren's of Montreal occupied the gallery. It was the finest church in the Diocese of Ottawa and it was time to have it consecrated. Only one other church in the diocese had been consecrated at this time and that was St. Eugene de Prescott.

#### The Consecration of St. Mary's.

The ceremony of consecration dates from the Old Law. Moses by the Command of God built a Tabernacle and consecrated it "with its altars and its table, and all things used in the worship of God; not only did he consecrate them by prayers, but he anointed them with oil; for God commanded him that he should make chrism and anoint all these, with the ark of the covenant and the tabernacle of the Lord."

The ceremony took place at St. Mary's on the 7th of October, 1875. The day before was a day of fast and abstinence for the parish. His Lordship Bishop Duhamel arrived on the evening train from Ottawa and was met by a large crowd, headed by our new pastor Fr. E.J.J. Stenson, who nine months before had become priest here when Fr. Faure left for Pembroke. A procession quickly formed headed by the Almonte Brass Band and the Bishop and other dignitaries were escorted to the presbytery. Here representatives from the congregation and the dignitaries of the Father Mathew Temperance Association, resplendent in top hats and cutaways, presented addresses of loyalty and affection to their newly appointed Bishop on this great occasion, which also marked his first official visit to this parish. Priests from Kingston, Perth, Brockville, and Ottawa all came to pay their homage, including one priest from England. Altogether there were twenty-five. The same evening, in solemn procession, the sacred relics of Sts. Irenaeus and Marcellinus, were conveyed to the main altar. A new church in a new land was forever linked with the early Christians, who in the catacombs of Rome, worshipped Christ over the bones of those who died for Him.

The morning of the 7th dawned clear and beautiful. With the first autumn daylight, crowds hurried to the church to witness the imposing splendor of a pontifical High Mass of Consecration by his Lordship. After the first Gospel, a sermon was preached, suitable to the occasion, by Fr. St. Laurence of the College of Ottawa. In the evening at Vespers the Venerable Fr. Dawson delivered an eloquent sermon on the Church. It was a memorable occasion, fifty-two years after the first Mass in the wilderness of Ramsey Township.



## The Blessing of the Bells

On Sunday, June 8th, 1884, the Feast of the Blessed Trinity, the Blessing of the Peal Bells marked another important step in the building of St. Mary's. The interior was beautiful, the exterior and grounds pleasing to the eye, but the church lacked a bell. For ten years the bell on the school house was used, but this was no longer convenient, and besides, the bell tower had stood empty since the building had been completed. The need for a bell was explained to the congregation by their pastor Fr. D.F. Foley. Like it had always been in the parish, they rose as one to support their priest. After much discussion they shelved the original idea of hanging one large bell of two thousand pounds in the tower, in favour of purchasing a peal of three bells. The firm of H.M. Shane & Co. of Baltimore, Maryland, offered to ship the bells at a reasonable price and their offer was accepted. The Father Mathew Temperance Association offered a large donation from their funds, and in addition organized a parish picnic and later a concert to raise the balance. The tower had to be prepared to receive the bells and the job was awarded to William Oakley who worked from plans prepared by T. McAuliffe. A substantial set of stairs was erected by William Bowes. A temporary stand was erected by William Clement outside the church and the bells suspended from it for the actual ceremony of the blessing or "baptism of the bells."

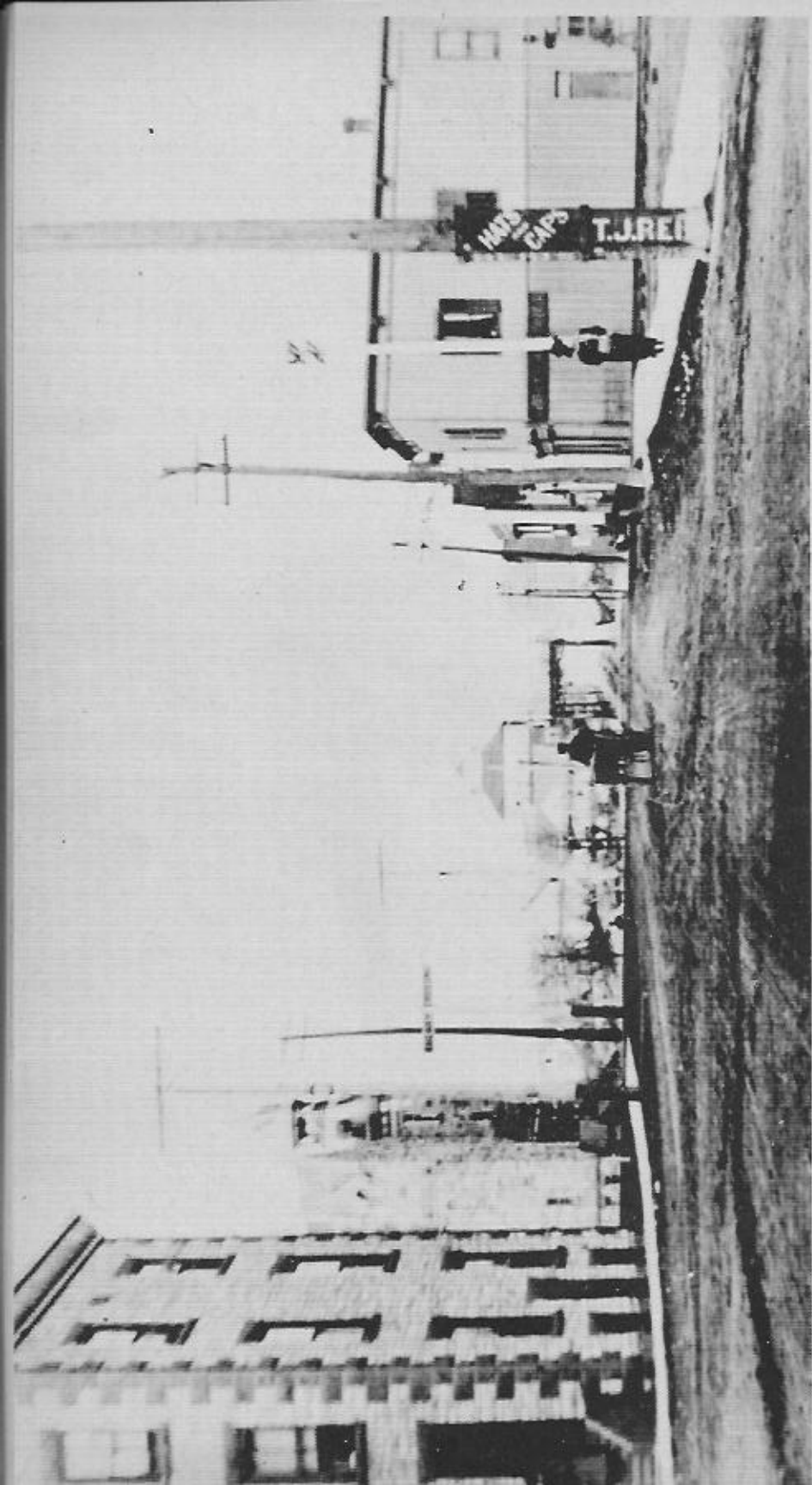
His Lordship Bishop Duhamel came in person to perform the imposing ceremony that had originated in the eight century, when church bells came into general use in Europe. The names and weights of the peal bells are St. Mary, 1200 lbs., St. Anne, 600 lbs. and St. Patrick, 350 lbs. The sponsors were the following leading men of the Parish:

James Dowdal	John O'Reilly
Edward McDermott	Henry Stafford
Thomas McDermott	P. Slattery
P. Corkery	John Vaughn
John Neville	Thomas Foley
P. Daley	M. Nixon
John Slattery	Dr. D.P. Lynch
Thomas Murphy	John McKinnon
John Ryan	P. Reilly
Patrick Seymour	

The service began with High Mass in the church. In addition to the regular congregation there were many from other denominations who were invited guests, and many who came as a sign of the good feeling and harmony that existed in the community. When Mass was over, the Bishop took the pulpit and preached an eloquent sermon using the 150th Psalm for his text . . . Praise Him with the blast of the trumpet, praise Him with lyre and harp. Praise Him with timbrel and dance, praise Him with strings and pipe. Praise Him with sounding cymbals, praise Him with clanging cymbals. Let everything that has breath, praise the LORD! ALLELUIA.

So the Psalmist had called for every musical sound to the Glory of God. . . and so the Bishop reminded the people of the place the bells would have in their lives. The people followed the Bishop and clergy from the church to witness the ceremony of blessing. When the ritual was complete His Lordship rang each bell in turn, and his example was followed by everyone present, setting up a joyous clamour through the whole town. Some days afterwards, the bells were hoisted to their final positions in the tower, to begin their mission of summoning the faithful to worship, to mark the Angelus, to raise the Gloria in special masses, to mark the passing of a soul, to announce the joy of union between a man and a woman, to tell that an infant had been enrolled among the people of God.

St. Mary's was truly complete.



Bridge St. looking across the C.P.R. tracks, and the front bridge to the old Windsor Hotel on the left. This photo was taken at the turn of the century.

## The Schools of St. Mary's.

The joy of the church, our Spiritual Mother, like the joy of our mortal mothers is in her children. Educating the young in material and spiritual things has ever been her task. After the work of salvation comes the work of education. In the midst of great difficulties and self-sacrifice, in the year 1873, one year after becoming a parish, our first school was erected. It was a wood frame building, fifty feet by thirty-six feet in dimension, veneered with red brick and two stories high. It was erected on the school property directly behind the church. The first school board was elected in November 1873 and were as follows: John O'Reilly, Richard Driscoll and Thomas Foley. The first two were from Almonte and the last represented the country. The first teacher hired was a Mr. Culhene.

The old school was operated steadily for the next forty years and we find the names of the following teachers: Mr. R. Dowdall, Mr. O'Day, Mr. Barret, Mr. W.A. Smith, Miss Morrow and Miss Haley. In the year 1885 there were between one hundred ten and one hundred twenty students on the rolls, depending on the season. That same year the school board had grown to six members, James Dowdall, John O'Reilly, Dr. Lynch, P. Seymour, Henry Stafford and E.W. Smith. Two teachers were employed: Mr. McEntee and Miss Rawley. They were followed by Jean Stafford, Eva Sullivan, Eva Hogan, Hattie Boyle, Miss Grace, and Miss Buttler.

Teachers' salaries, though very low in those days, were often hard to meet. In 1909, Misses Grace and Stafford received thirty and thirty-one dollars a month and the Principal, Miss Sullivan received forty-one. Funds did not depend entirely on taxes, as is the case today. Receipts for 1909 are given here:

January 1 — Balance in the Bank	\$ 85.00
Balance from 1908 picnic	2.25
From Church Entertainment	97.35
Raised 1909 Picnic	283.00
Govt. Grant to Teachers	47.65
Govt. Grant to School	78.00
Town Taxes	711.37
Township Taxes	169.47
Borrowed to meet expenses	213.00

In 1913, at the urgent request of Rev. Father McNally, six sisters of St. Joseph left the motherhouse in Peterborough and opened a mission in Almonte. They were Mother St. Dominic, superior, Sister Evangelista (teacher), Sister Ethelreda (music), Sister Genevieve (housekeeper), Sister Hilda McCormick (church), and Sister Augustine (primary teacher).

To provide accommodation for the Sisters, the parish purchased the Windsor Hotel, a large three-story brick building on Bridge St. and since 1945

known to us as the North Lanark Co-operative. The building was modified to provide for class rooms on the ground floor, chapel and music rooms on the second floor, and the third floor was the living quarters. For over forty years the cross the sisters erected on top of the building remained. With the opening of the classrooms, old St. Mary's was closed as a school, but remained in use for parish functions.

Mass was celebrated in the chapel for the Sisters by Father Cunningham, then Curate at St. Mary's. Though meeting the needs of the times, the old Windsor Hotel was to say the least, inconvenient as it was a long walk in winter to the church. However, they operated the school and gave music lessons to the town's children who were interested, all during the First World War.

During the autumn of 1918, Rev. Father Fraser of the China Missions came to Almonte. He was seeking a suitable place to open a seminary and language school to train young priests to be missionaries in China. The "hotel" suited his purpose and was later sold to him. In December the same year the sisters vacated the building and took up residence in a double house on Farm St. near the church. Old St. Mary's school was re-opened. The Farm St. convent had no water supply. Water to operate the toilet depended on a cistern which went dry by January, and then water had to be bought at twenty-five cents a barrel. Drinking water was carried from a well on the church grounds. Rev. Father O'Toole, on the staff of the China Mission Seminary at that time, Fr. Fraser himself and Father Louis Connelly, curate at St. Mary's, often came to the Farm St. residence to say Mass for the Sisters. At the time of the move to Farm Street Sister St. Fergus was Superior and remained in that capacity until her death in March, 1921.

In September, 1921, Sister Basella, the music teacher became superior. She was determined that a convent would be built. She placed a light, we are told, before the statue of St. Joseph for this intention and the light was kept burning until her dream became a reality. Toward the close of that year, she and Sister Rosalea drew up the plans for the present beautiful residence. It was modelled in part, on the design of the Sacred Heart Convent in Sault St. Marie. They took their plan to Father Cavanagh. He in turn formed a building committee composed of Bart McAuliffe, George Clement, Frank Hogan, John Grace, Charles Talon and James Divine. They worked as a team and in March 1922, the first sod was turned. Mr. A.C. Gilmour was the contractor. The building was ready for the Sisters by autumn, complete with rose bushes that Frank Hogan had ordered from Ireland. A few days after moving in a banquet was held. Bishop O'Brien of Peterborough was a guest as was Fr. Cavanagh, and Canon Fay a graduate of St. Mary's School.

#### **St. Mary's High School.**

The first attempt to teach above Grade VIII level was made in 1921 when Sr. Rosalea began First Form work with a class of sixteen pupils. This was



discontinued after one school year, due to lack of accommodation. Another attempt was made in 1927 when Sr. Alexis started Grade IX work in a room devoid of a teacher's desk, pupil's desks or even blackboards. With the co-operation of the women of the Sodality of the Immaculate Conception, and of St. Mary's Club, equipment was soon purchased. Second Form was taught in 1928, Third Form in 1930 and Fourth form in 1931. In 1940 Grades XI and XII attended Almonte High school due to lack of space at St. Mary's. In one large room at the old school, it was divided by a gyproc screen, with Grade IX on one side and Grade X on the other. The noise was too great, so Grade X was transferred to the Convent, where Grade XI and XII had been the year before. This room was also used to teach catechism to the senior students each Sunday after Mass. In June 1947, school enrollment had reached its highest level since 1873, with one hundred fifty-two pupils from Grade I to X and there were twenty-two pupils at Almonte High school who had graduated from St. Mary's. The rooms were crowded beyond capacity. September and the beginning of the new term saw the end of the High School experiment. Grade IX and X would also go to Almonte High School. It was at this time that Sister Flora organized the first Parent Teachers Association in the parish.

Since 1913, Almonte has always had a music teacher at the convent. In Feb. 1941 a theory centre for the Royal College of Music examinations was established. In 1946 a centre for practical examinations was added. Since that date an examiner has conducted music examinations every year.

The old school building, besides being crowded, was ill designed by modern school standards. It was though in surprisingly good condition, having had extensive repairs done to it after a fire in 1945. The time had come for it to be replaced. The building of the new school took place in the pastorate of Father Maurice Egan and is mentioned in his biography. Subsequent additions, and the recent addition of a beautiful gymnasium, have made St. Mary's School the pride of the parish.

Since 1913, when the Sisters of St. Joseph came, with the blessing of Bishop O'Brien of Peterborough, they have been the soul of our school system and our church. This is a good place to list the religious names of the Holy Women who have been superiors here and who live in the hearts of us who remember them, and because our lives were blessed by their presence - in our prayers.

1913—1918	Sister St. Dominic	1938—1941	Sister M. Irene
1918—1920	Sister St. Fergus	1941—1946	Sister Gabriel
1920—1921	Sister Placidid	1946—1949	Sister M. Alice
1921—1927	Sister Basilla	1949—1955	Sister Flora
1927—1928	Sister Imelda	1955—1956	Sister M. St. Robert
1928—1929	Sister Constance	1956—1956	Sister St. Clela
1929—1930	Sister Agnes Marie	1956—1962	Sister Amadeus
1930—1932	Sister St. Charles	1962—1965	Sister St. Lucy
1932—1938	Sister Alexis	1965—1968	Sister St. Basil
		1969	Sister St. Frederick



Sister Estelle's Chamber Orchestra in 1932. Standing - left to right - Francis Hogan, Wilfrid Grace, Thomas Liberty, Frank Southwell, Arthur Scott, James Dunn, Thomas Hogan, Seated - Margaret Rooney, Clare Hogan, Mary Coderre, Front row - Pat Grace, John Dunn and John Coderre.



Left to Right Rear - James Dunn, Patrick Grace, George Larocque, Canon George W. O'Toole, John Coderre, Francis Hogan, Thomas Hogan, Front - Raymond Grace, Raymond Grace (a cousin), Gervase Finner, Wilfrid Grace, Ambrose McGrath and Vincent McGrath.



### **The Library of Old St. Mary's**

While the good people of Ramsey, struggling with mattock and axe to conquer the timber and create the acres of fertile farms which are now the pride of their owners, the development of intellectual and moral feeling was never neglected. Father Edward Vaughn, who in 1853 had been visiting St. Mary's, was a promoter of good reading and suggested to the parishioners that they should establish a lending library. A meeting was held on Dec. 31, 1853, for the purpose of electing officers to create a library. Minutes of the meeting show "Moved by Edward Mahon, seconded by M. McDermott, that Michael Foley take the chair. Carried. Moved by Edward Dowling and seconded by W. O'Reardon, that, Messrs. Michael McDermott, William Nagle, Timothy O'Reardon, E.B. Mahon, Isaiah McKean and Michael Foley do form a committee with power to add to their number, to transact the Parochial Library. Carried..."

Books in 1854 were expensive and the creating of even a small library was a luxury. An entrance fee of twenty-five cents was assessed, and a family membership for one year was one dollar. Thirty-seven members paid their dues in the beginning and two hundred books were purchased. The books were all moral, religious, doctrinal and historical works, together with some instructive fiction.

For fifteen years the library continued its influence for good and the collection added to from time to time. Many volumes were destroyed at the burning of the first church in 1868, but some of those that were in the hands of subscribers were returned and even to this day may be seen in the vestry cupboards. One of these volumes is the 1853 edition of "The life of the Blessed Virgin and Traditions of Her Feasts". This volume also bears the library plate of the F.M.T.A. Library. Soon after its establishment in 1873 the Father Mathew Temperance Association took on the responsibility of operating a library for its own membership and the families of the parish. There are several volumes still in existence, bearing their plate and often re-plated with the title "St. Mary's Library." Many books were gifts from interested citizens. We find John O'Reilly presenting a copy of "Memorials of Those who suffered for the Catholic Faith in Ireland" in 1879. The complete works of Charles Dickens and Sir Walter Scott and the Life of Sir John Thompson are side by side. A small lined scribbler lists all the books in possession of the library and it is interesting to note what appealed to our grandparents.

## The Catholic Women's League

We honour and are grateful to the memory of that handful of women who came forward at a meeting on September 19, 1937, and formed St. Mary's Council of the Catholic Women's League of Canada. Under their banner bearing the motto "For God and Country" and their Patroness "Our Lady of Good Counsel" this faithful group of women have supported with their toil in the kitchen many a banquet and gathering. Their prayerful support of all in distress can never be measured.

In 1962, on the occasion of their 25th anniversary, scrolls were presented to all the living charter members, and we find the following names:

Burns, Mrs. Ken Sr.	O'Connor, Mrs. George
Malloy, Mrs. F.	Hickey, Mrs. R.J.
Smith, Miss Mary	Burke, Mrs. F.
McDermott, Miss Una	Larocque, Mrs. D.
Hogan, Mrs. Jim	Foy, Miss Mary
France, Mrs. Wm.	Clement, Mrs. E.P.
Owen, Miss Alice	Grace, Mrs. J.F.
Foy, Miss Bridget	Kennedy, Mrs. J.A.
McKevitt, Mrs. Annie	Doolan, Miss Muriel
Liberty, Mrs. Charles	Doolan, Miss Mary
Dunn, Mrs. J.F. (Dr.)	Carroll, Miss K.
Rooney, Mrs. P.J.	Hogan, Mrs. Frank
Harrold, Miss Mary	Kitts, Mrs. Clare
O'Neill, Mrs. D.	

### Deceased Members:

Mrs. T. O'Grady	Mrs. Sara Vastano
Miss Teresa Stafford	Mrs. Peter Burns
Mrs. Daniel Foy	Mrs. Teresa Dwyer
Mrs. M. J. McCabe	Mrs. M.J. Hogan
Mrs. J. Brown	Mrs. Mickey Coderre
Mrs. J. O'Brien	

Among the first works of social action to aid people outside the parish was the collecting and forwarding of food and clothing to people stricken by drought in Western Canada. With the outbreak of the Second World War, they turned their attention to our armed forces, supporting them with food, parcels, and cigarettes. (Eighty-five graduates of St. Mary's school served in the armed services.) Sewing circles and knitting produced many articles of clothing for use by the troops. With the end of the war they were again ready to aid the innocent victims of it and fifteen hundred pounds of useable clothing were sent overseas in 1946. Christmas baskets for the needy, financial support for Brownies and Girl Guides, the Cancer Society, the Red Cross, the Hospital Auxiliary and many other organizations received support from the C.W.L. The Spritual development and education of the young is their constant preoccupation. With other Councils across Canada, they up-hold good films

and literature. In addition to their work in St. Mary's parish, members of the League have long cared for the Missions at Darling. Who has not heard of Miss Mary Foy, a long time lay teacher at our school, who always found time to teach catechism at Darling, the ancestral home of her family. Canadian Missions in the care of the Jesuits and the Oblates have been supported by the C.W.L. as have the Scarboro Foreign Missions and the South India Missions.

On the occasion of their 25th Anniversary in 1962 the League had one hundred twenty-five active members. The 1969 executive is comprised of the following women:

President	— Mrs. Paula Fanning
1st. Vice P.	— Mrs. Mary Gallagher
2nd. Vice P.	— Mrs. Kay Muldoon
3rd. Vice P.	— Mrs. Brenda Schaller
Secretary	— Miss Mary Foy
Treasurer	— Mrs. Nora Rooney



A group of ladies with the Anniversary Cake September 1969.  
Baked by Mrs. Bob McLaren and Mrs. Hilary Finner.

### The Resting Places.

There are three cemeteries in the care of the parish, and we could perhaps say there are four, because even the hallowed ground around the church buildings does yet contain traces of the earth of early pioneers, laid to rest long before the present church and rectory were built. When Daniel Shipman gave the land to the Catholics (and to the Anglicans on the east side of the river), the parcels were for "all church purposes." An essential purpose was for a burial ground and the land where the rectory now stands was used for internments from the 1820's until 1872. As mentioned elsewhere in this story, St. Mary's was raised from a mission to a parish that year. The cemetery was closed because laws had been passed forbidding internments within the limits of the corporation for the growing town, and was also needed to build the presbytery which was completed in December 1873. Many graves and monuments were removed from the site to the Clayton Cemetery or to the new ground about two miles east of the town on the Huntley Road (now Highway 44) and the 12th line of Ramsey. It was a three acre plot purchased from John Malone and divided into lots. It was soon found that the land was unsuited for its purpose as it was low lying and inclined to be swampy. Two miles on a mud road behind a horse drawn hearse was a long way even in those days.

A meeting was held for all the parishioners in June 1884 to discuss the cemetery situation. It was decided to move to a new site on the Carleton Place road (now Highway 29). Ten acres were accordingly purchased for \$10.00 from James Dowdall on a farm known then as the McFarlane property. The property was deeded to Bishop J.T. Duhamel, Bishop of the Diocese of Ottawa and under the guidance of one of his staff, Fr. Bouillon, part of it was laid out in eight by thirteen foot lots. Henry Clement of Almonte fenced it and a cross was erected. In later years his son Perry Clement built the vault and used the iron shutters of the old registry office for doors.

A little altar boy of twelve was the first interment in the new burial place. He was Orion McDonnell - a good and pious child - laid to rest until the final resurrection. The date was August 18, 1884. On September 3rd the second burial took place and age joined youth, when Isaiah McKean, a man who had grown old in the Lord and the service of his church and his neighbours, was laid to rest.

The cemetery near the village of Clayton consists of two acres and was given to St. Mary's about the year 1860 by Michael McGauran and both he and his wife sleep there in addition to many who were transferred from the original cemetery here in 1873.

You may still find in rural Ontario and other provinces that the cemetery is near the church and that was the original plan of St. Mary's. It was customary that the remains of the departed should lie near the church where they worshipped in life. It was a reminder to the living that they should pray for the souls of the dead and that they too would some day rest under the same sod. Towns grow and laws change but the original precept is not forgotten. Pray for our departed and for yourself for you must one day join with them.



## The Shepherds of St. Mary's.



**The Reverend Mr. John Macdonald V.G.**

Our first pastor was the Rev. Mr. John Macdonald. In those days, as now, there were numerous spellings of the surname, so I will use the style more commonly used for his branch of the family, the Macdonalds of Luibhe. The Gaelic translation indicates those who lived "By a bent arm of the sea." He was born in Knoidart, Scotland in 1782 and came to Glengarry in Upper Canada with his parents as an infant of three. His parents, John Macdonald and Anna McGillis were staunch Catholics as the family had been for over six hundred years. It was natural that they chose Glengarry where their kinsmen had settled after being driven from New York State by the American Revolution some few years earlier. These early United Empire Loyalist families were increased by continued migrations of disbanded highland soldiers (among them our first bishop) for many years.

Mhaister Ian or Father John, as he was affectionately called in Ramsey, had an older brother Aencas, who was a distinguished professor at the Seminary in Montreal and a "perfect English, French and Gaelic scholar." Owing to a serious shortage of clergy during the great Cholera Epidemic of 1832, he too was ordained a priest. His sister Catherine became a nun and was professed as Socur Sainte Pelagie.

Father John was educated at the Petit Seminaire in Montreal and studied divinity at Quebec City, where he was ordained in 1814. He returned briefly to Glengarry before joining the new settlement of Perth. He was the only priest in the whole vast wooded land of Lanark. His name, we read, was a household word, not only among the Catholic flock, but by everyone who met him. During his time at Perth he attended to the spiritual wants of the

mission here for some fifteen years. He conducted the first Sacrifice of the Mass in Ramsey Township in a cabin on Lot 13 of the Second Concession on July 24, 1823. Who could recount the hardships and fatigue he underwent in those days when the roads were footpaths marked by blazed trees, and black flies and mosquitoes were the only companions in the brooding woods. Shelter was scarce, food whatever a poor settler could spare and money non-existent.

In 1838 his Bishop called him to St. Raphaels to succeed another priest by the name of John Macdonald. Our Father John was priest of that ancient parish (the first in Upper Canada) until 1864 when he retired from the active ministry. For the next fifteen years, although his body was worn out by early privation, his mind was clear and active. His advice and blessing was sought from far and wide. He went to Glory on the 15th of March, 1879, aged ninety-seven years and in the sixty-fifth year of his Holy Priesthood. He died knowing the seeds he had planted in Ramsey had taken root. Though now in the Diocese of Ottawa, St. Mary's stone church was ten years old, the mission had been a parish for seven years and a school had been in operation for six years.



**Monsignor John Hugh McDonagh**

Monsignor John Hugh McDonagh, the second mission priest to attend the infant settlement was born in County Mayo, Ireland in 1812 and was ordained in Kingston in 1836. He succeeded Father Macdonald at Perth in 1838 and served Ramsey for the next seven years, or until we passed into the care of St. Philips church in Richmond in 1845.

The honour of building the first church in Ramsey belongs to Father McDonagh. The land on which are erected all the church and school buildings (with the exception of a lot on the east side of the school purchased from Dr. Hanna, during Fr. Egan's pastorate) was donated to this early priest by Daniel Shipman and consisted of one and a half acres. In 1842, he impressed upon his scattered flock the need to build their own church. They had been holding services in private homes, but the population was growing and their material means had improved greatly. His appeal was cheerfully responded to and soon "old St. Mary's" was under way. It was forty by sixty feet, clap-boarded outside, lathed and plastered inside. Mr. Edward Dowling, it is said, drew the first stick of timber for the church. Everyone donated their skills, their time and their scanty money. Thirty five pews were built and the annual rent received from them was about one hundred dollars. Some years after the church was built, the outside was lathed and rough casted at a cost of sixty pounds sterling. More repair work was done in 1854. Elsewhere in this little book is a sketch of the old church, made just before the latter work was done. The wooden church stood, beside its cemetery, a beacon for twenty-six years, until its total destruction by fire in 1868.

Not only in our parish was Father McDonagh a builder. He built the beautiful church of St. John and its presbytery in Perth. (The spire was added to it in later years by Fr. J.S. O'Connor). His labours in Perth during his long pastorate there were abundant and inspiring. A nephew, also named John Hugh was priest at Nappanee in the 1860's and a great-nephew, Monsignor J.A. McDonagh, is president of the Catholic Church Extension Society of Canada. It is to him that the present narrator is indebted to for the following beautiful tribute to our first builder and second priest. This poem was written about him by his intimate friend, Thomas D'Arcy McGee, a father of Confederation, on April 13, 1867:

We who sat at his cheerful hearth,  
 Know the wisdom rare, of priceless worth;  
 He bears away from the face of the earth;  
 Peace to the Soul of the Priest of Perth.

Dead! and his sun of life so high;  
 Dead! with no cloud in all his sky;  
 Dead! and it seems but yesterday,  
 When happy and hopeful he sailed away,  
     For Westport Bay and Eternal Rome;  
     Ashes to ashes; Earth to earth!

God rest the Soul of the Priest of Perth.

Yet there was a sign in his gracious sky;  
 Up where the Cross he lifted high,  
 Glow'd in the morn and evening light;  
 Kissed by the reverent moon at night,  
 Glow'd through the vista'd, northern pines,  
 "That's Perth, where the Cross so brightly shines"

Many will say, as many have said,-  
 Bearing true tribute to the dead-  
 Ashes to ashes! Earth to earth!  
 Rest to the Soul of the Priest of Perth.

And there was the home he loved to make,  
 So dear for friend and kinsmen's sake;  
 Oh! many a day, and many a year,  
 Will come for his mourners far and near,  
 But never a friend more true or dear;  
     Many a wreath of Canadian snow,  
     Will hide the garden and gates we know,  
 And many a spring will deck again,  
 His trees, in all their leafy glory,  
 But none shall ever bring back for men  
     The smile, the song, the singless story,  
     The holy zeal that still presided,  
     Which none encountered and derided;  
     That yielded not one fast or feast,  
 One rite or rubric of the Priest;  
     Ashes to ashes! Earth to earth!  
 Peace to the Soul of the Priest of Perth.

A golden Priest of the good old school,  
 Fearless and prompt to lead and rule;  
 Freed of every taint of pride,  
 But ready, aye ready, to chide or guide,  
 Tenderly binding the bruised heart,  
 Sparing no sin its penal smart;  
 His will was as the granite rock,  
 To the prowler, menacing his flock,  
 But never lichen or wild-flower grew,  
 On rocky ground, more fair to view,  
 Than his charity was to all he knew;  
 Laying the outlines deep and broad,  
 Of an infant Church, he daily trod,  
 His path, in the visible sight of God;  
     Ashes to ashes! Earth to earth!  
 Peace to the Soul of the Priest of Berth.

Oh Saints of God! Ye who await,  
 Your beloved by the Beautiful Gate;  
 Ye Saints who people his native shore,  
 Beloved Saint John whose name he bore;  
 And ye Apostles! Unto whom,  
 He prayed, a pilgrim, by your tomb;  
 And Thou! O Queen of Heaven and Earth,  
     Receive—Receive—the Priest of Perth.

John Hugh McDonagh visited Ireland and Rome just before his death on September 28, 1866. His remains were laid to rest in the Sanctuary of his handiwork, St. Johns, at Perth.





### **Father Terence Smith**

Our third mission priest was the Reverend Terence Smith, from County Caven, Ireland, where he was born in 1806. He came to Canada as a young man and after training was ordained in Montreal in 1836. In November that year he was sent to Richmond, Ontario. Richmond began as a mission church in 1819. A small wooden church was erected there in 1822 which was destroyed by fire in 1847. (This year, Archbishop Joseph-Aurèle Plourde celebrated a special 150th anniversary mass at St. Philips to mark the first mass celebrated by Alexander McDonnell).

From Richmond, Father Smith travelled regularly to Corkery and Almonte. It was under Father Smith's encouragement that the first St. Michael's church was built in Corkery in 1837. It was built of logs, and measured thirty by thirty feet and erected on land that the Honourable Peter Robinson had set aside for the purpose. In 1845 the title deed for lot 15 on the 8th concession was issued to the Diocese of Kingston. Fire was the bane of the early churches. The log chapel was destroyed by fire before the present stone St. Michael's was erected in 1865.

The narrator of this story is indebted to the late Rev. J.L. Gourlay for a glimpse of Richmond and Father Smith. In his book about the early Methodist and Presbyterian churches in the Ottawa Valley which was published in the last century, Rev. Gourlay remarks *"the Government built a school in Richmond and paid one or two schoolmasters for a year or two. The school-house was used as a preaching station for catholic and protestant alike. The first to officiate in it was a priest, Mr. McDonnell, who was to be Bishop of Kingston, before his end came. . . . The first settled priest appears to have been Fr. Heron. We never met him, but we are well acquainted with his successor, Father Terence Smith from County Cavan, Ireland, who ruled there for many years and had both hands full on many a fair day held twice a year in the village. He was of gigantic stature and when mounted on a splendid charge with a long whip, or even on foot, he was a terror to evil-doers. Father Smith often charged through on horseback to the "Balligibelines" in Huntly and like young Lord Lochinvar that came out of the west, in all the wide border his steed was the best. He was succeeded by Father Cullen, and then we believe, by our old school-fellow, Father O'Connor."*

We find Father Smith's entries in a small parochial register that was kept for St. Mary's mission in Ramsey for the years 1845, 1846, and 1848. The Diocese of Ottawa was formed in 1847 and Ramsey and Pakenham passed to its jurisdiction the next year. In the year 1846, the names of Father Smith and Father O'Connell appeared on a subscription list for lathing and plastering the outside of Ramsey Roman Catholic Church. .

Father Smith visited Ireland in 1846 and he was replaced by Father Peter O'Connell and it is his name we find on the registers for all of 1847. Father Smith returned and remained priest at Richmond until 1851, when he went to Smith's Falls. He laboured there for eight years and passed to Glory in December 1859 at the age of fifty-three. He is buried in the Church at Smith Falls and a marble plaque marks his dust.



**Father Peter O'Connell (1846—1848)**

Father O'Connell, as we mentioned in Father Smith's brief description, has his name in the Parish register only during the year that he replaced our pastor when he was away in Ireland. In 1851, Father O'Connell became parish priest at Richmond, but by this time, we had become part of the Archdiocese of Bytown. His tenure then really ended in 1848 and for the next twenty years, our priests came from St. Michaels in Corkery, with visiting priests from the city.



**Father Edward Vaughan (1848—1868)**

This devoted priest was born on the 8th of June, 1813 at Westport, County Mayo, Ireland. He was educated in his native land and ordained by that famous prelate, Archbishop McHale at Tuam in September, 1836. He was a priest for five years near his home, coming as a missionary to Kingston in 1841. For a time he ministered to the scattered Catholics along the St. Lawrence from Gananoque. With the forming of the Diocese of Bytown, Father Vaughan became one of the original fifteen priests who rallied round Bishop Guigues.

Father Vaughan had responsibility for Huntley, Pakenham, Darling, Lavant and Ramsey. His task was one of labour and constant travel. He was, we read, an eloquent speaker, and his voice was *"ever heard in upholding the faith and his cheering words of encouragement to the negligent, brought many to mercy and repentance."* His rigorous duties began to undermine his health. He made a short visit back to Ireland, but with his health un-improved on return, tendered his resignation to his Bishop. He sought the dry air of the Western United States and spent some time at the Monastery of Mount Melleray at Dubuque. He returned for a time to the Ottawa Valley and attended the mission at Osgoode. However, his health failed again, and he retired to the Monastery at Tracadie, N.B. in 1869. There, until his death in May 1882, he continued to pray for his old parishioners.





**Father A. O'Malley (1868—1872)**

The present church of the Holy Name of Mary is a more eloquent reminder of Father O'Malley, than any other monument that could be raised to his memory. We are reminded elsewhere in this story about the work he did and the inspiration he was at the time of the fire in 1868. Above all, he devoted himself in the last years that we formed part of his mission to upholding the faith of his charges in a very difficult time. A contemporary of his spoke of him as follows: *"He has an Irish heart, loves his native land and loves the Church, and is beloved in turn by all who appreciate those qualities"*.

He laboured for many years in the eastern portion of the Diocese and at Portage du Fort. After Almonte became a parish, he remained a close friend and neighbour until October 1884, when he resigned from the Parish of St. Michaels and returned to his birthplace in County Mayo, Ireland.



**Rev. Doctor Remi Faure (1872—1875)**

Since the Mission of St. Mary's was raised to a Parish in July 1872, the Register of Baptisms, Marriages and Deaths has been kept here. Early records are to be found in Perth, Richmond and Huntley. Some records remain here for 1846 to 1850, but others were lost in the fire. The first recording in the permanent record is in the beautiful handwriting of Reverend Dr. Faure. It is dated July 21, 1872 and notes the Holy Baptism of Margaret Theresa Cullen.

Our first truly parish priest was a native of France and was ordained in Ottawa. He continued the work on the stone church and inspired the building of the Separate School in the second year he was here. From Almonte, he was transferred to Pembroke and when that area became a separate diocese, and his church the seat of Bishop Lorrain in 1882, Father Faure accepted a prominent parish in the city of Buffalo, N.Y. from his old friend and native son of Clayton, Ontario- Rt. Rev. Bishop S.V. Ryan, who was incidentally, the first Bishop of Buffalo. The last act in Father Faure's handwriting in our parish register is dated 7 January, 1875 and is the marriage of John Currin and Mary Ann Whyte.

It would be a grave omission if we did not mention the Father Mathew Temperance Association, which he established in Almonte in 1873. This famous organization remained in our parish until fairly recent times. In addition to the cause of temperance, their work of charity and financial help to the church and school and the provision of a meeting hall for the town, should be remembered. On the roles of membership, one may read the names of many of the great civic leaders of the day. At their first election we find Rev. Doctor Faure as President, Joseph Fairbairn, Vice-president, John Stafford 2nd Vice-president, R. Driscoll, Secretary, E.W. Smith, assistant secretary. John O'Reilly, treasurer. They had a management committee bearing the names of P. Gleeson, P. Stafford, J. Donohue, T. McAuliffe, John Slattery, E. Dowdall, Thos. Corcoran and John Vaughan. Many of these leaders remained with the FMTA until death. Their role in the parish and town grew. In 1884 the following officers directed the Association:

Spiritual Director — Rev. D.F. Foley  
 President — John O'Reilly  
 1st. Vice P. — E. Letang  
 2nd Vice P. — Robert Johnston  
 Secretary — P.F. McGarry  
 Asst. Secretary — R. McDonnell  
 Treasurer — John Curtin  
 Librarian — M. McAuliffe.

On committee were  
 Hugh Fay  
 P. O'Brian  
 M. Hogan  
 John Ryan  
 B. Bolton  
 John Lynch  
 M. Grace.

A deeply spiritual and scholarly man, Reverend Doctor Faure in his three short years as our first permanent pastor, with temperance, charity and the education of the young as his goal, set us a path to follow that has guided the parish for nearly a century.



The Presbytery and Sacristy were built in Rev. Doctor Faure's pastorate. This photo was taken at the time of the consecration of the church.



**Father E.J.J. Stenson (1875—1878)**

Reverend Father E.J.J. Stenson's first entry in the parish register is dated 16 Jan. 1875 and records the Holy Baptism of Mary Cor-de-leon Perry. His immediate task was to continue the decoration and furnishing of the interior of the church and to prepare it for the great celebration and consecration in 1875. The Consecration is mentioned in the chapter covering the building of the church. The careful handwriting in the register on that historic day is that of Bishop Duhamel and lists all the clergy who were in attendance.

Father Stenson had a zeal for souls and sought to extend the sacraments to many who were out of touch, due to isolation and poor roads. In Feb. 1876 there were a total of one hundred sixty-three confirmations sealed by the Bishop and two years later, he returned to confirm another sixty-seven candidates. For the spiritual advancement of the parish, Father Stenson established the Association of St. Francis de Sales in May, 1877. As a charitable organization to extend material help to the poor he organized the St. Vincent de Paul Society here in January 1876.

The last act signed by this holy priest is dated 13 April, 1878 and records the marriage of Theresa Tierney to Mathew James Stenson.



### **Reverend John F. Coffey, M.A. (1878—1881)**

Father Coffey is best remembered as the great catholic journalist who for many years edited "The Catholic Record" at London, Ontario. He was a native of Ottawa and though not officially installed as parish priest, administered affairs, both spiritual and temporal, at St. Mary's for over two years. He was a highly respected and eloquent preacher. Every effort was made to keep him, but his Lordship Bishop Walsh knew he could reach a larger audience through the written word.

He continued the work of the St. Vincent de Paul Society with the able assistance of John O'Reilly, P. Daley, John O'Heare, E. Letang. It was in Father Coffey's time that the Forty Hours Devotion was established in the diocese (1879). This devotion is still carried on in our parish on dates appointed by the bishop each year.

Another ancient devotional exercise — The Way of the Cross- was established here by Father Coffey in August, 1880, by virtue of an Indult of His Holiness Pope Leo XIII. It is still practised in the parish, especially in the season of lent.



**Rev. B. Casey 1882**

Father Casey was an interim priest, pending the appointment of a parish priest. We find his name on the register from January to June 1882 only.



**Very Rev. Canon Declan F. Foley (1882—1903)**

Father Declan F. Foley was appointed parish priest here on the 8th of July, 1882. He was no stranger when he came, in fact, as secretary to his Lordship Bishop Duhamel, he had attended the Consecration here seven years earlier. We are deeply indebted to Father Foley for much of the information in this little history. In his long pastorate he kept careful notes of events and it is possible to find the names of those who formed committees and organizations during his twenty-one years here. He too, was a builder and St. Declan's of Darling bears the name of his baptismal saint. The first entry in the parish register in his hand is the Baptism of Mary Agnes Lynch when he was a visitor here, but his regular entries begin in 1882.

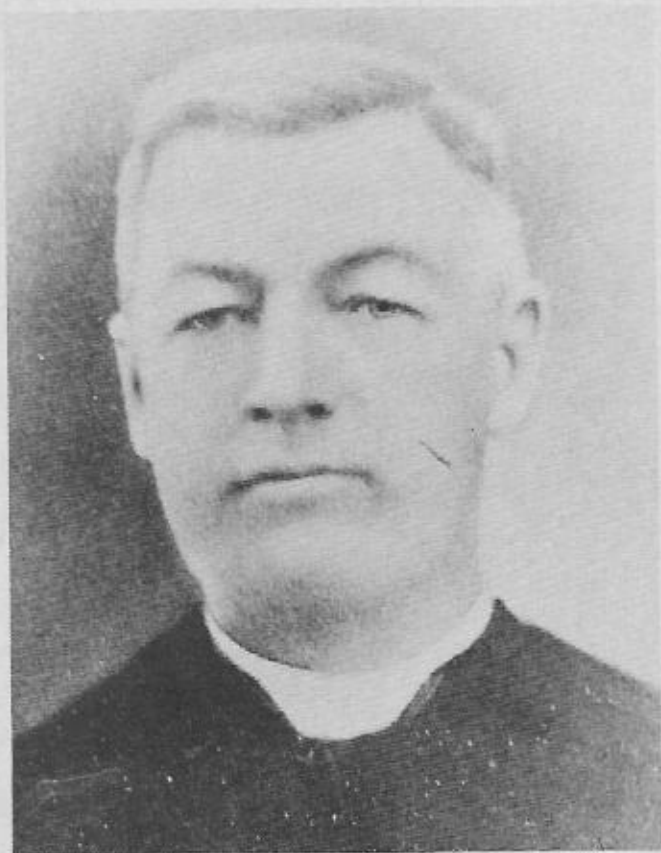
He revitalized the Father Mathew Temperance Association and assisted them to extend library service to the whole parish and beyond. In addition to upholding the virtue of temperance in an intemperate time, the FMTA supported the school financially and operated a community hall. Father Foley made a special effort to involve the women of the parish in all phases of the church's work. In 1884 he organized the Rosary Society for the married women. Its object was prayer and good works. The care and visiting of the sick were their special interests. They met every Sunday before High Mass to recite the Rosary together.

At the same time the Sodality of the Immaculate Conception was formed to involve the young women of the parish and to help them persevere in piety and virtue. In addition to a lively social and spiritual life, they had the special privilege of decorating and ornamenting the church. The first officers of this group were Miss Mary McDonnell, superior; Miss Mary Anne White, treasurer; Miss Mary Letang and Mary Wallace, assistant superiors; while Mary Nagle was secretary. The Association of the Sacred Heart of Jesus was established in the parish the same year, with the application of the Indulgences granted by Pope Pius IX in 1875.

While strengthening the spiritual advantages of his people, Father Foley aided in many material ways. Through him Branch Number 34 of the Catholic Mutual Benefit Society came into being in 1884. This was one of the earliest practical Credit Union and Insurance mutuals, having its beginnings in Niagara Falls, Ontario. Under the direction of its founder, Father Moynihan, it spread to the United States, and it was through Father Foley's friend, Bishop Ryan of Buffalo, that it came to Almonte. Again in the election of officers we find the names of faithful "doers", without whom no parish can flourish, and alas, no priest can function.

James Dowdall, president	Anthony Madden, Marshal
T.W. McDermott, 1st Vice p.	Peter Bourke, Guard
McAuliffe, Matt. 2nd Vice p.	Patrick Slattery, Chancellor
P.J. Doherty, Recording Sect'y.	Patrick McDermott, Trustee
Hugh Fay, Asst. Secretary	Joseph Letang, Sr. Trustee
Joseph Letang, Jr. Treasurer	

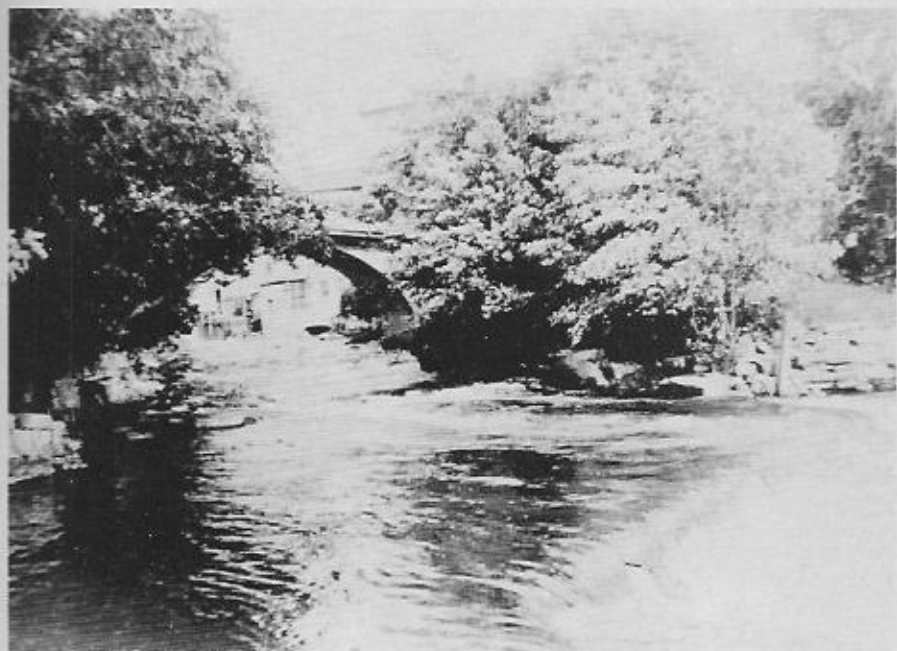
Father Foley, before the end of his long priesthood, enjoyed some years in retirement at Long Beach, California, but not before he left his mark in Catholic Journalism as editor of the "Catholic Record" at London, Ontario.



**Reverend John Harkin (1903—1911)**

The first act in the church Register in the handwriting of Father John Harkin was made in February, 1903 when he baptised William John France. Father Harkin was born and raised in the Ottawa area. He was born in 1861, the son of James Harkin and Ann Hurley at Van Kleeck Hill. Some elderly people who still recall him, speak of his greatlove of horses and remember that he was a very active man. St. Declans at Darling was in his care during his pastorate here and his last act, before his untimely death at the age of fifty, was the baptism of William Clarence Ranger in that church.

On the 5th of May, 1911, an entry signed by his Bishop, Charles Hugh Gauthier, marks the memory of Father Harkin's funeral service at St. Mary's. The solemn high mass was celebrated by his friend and neighbour Canon Patrick Corkery of Pakenham and the sermon was preached by Father George Fitzgerald of Our Lady of Good Counsel in Ottawa. Father Dowdall of Egansville and Father Fay of South March, both local men, assisted. After the chanting of the libra, he was borne away to rest with his parents at Van Kleeck Hill.



The old stone bridge. View from the millsite of the Old Red Knitting Co property.



Across the Bay to New England in 1900.





Bridge Street in 1900. (Note the new steps on the church)



Yesterday on Mill Street.



**Most Reverend Doctor John T. McNally (1911—1913)**

Like most of this little book, the narrator is in debt to many persons for this short biography of Father John T. McNally, D.D. Father McNally came to our parish in 1911 and the first entry in the Register in his hand is dated the 17th of June and records the funeral of Andrew Devine. Mr. Devine was in his 80th years and a life time supporter of the church and school.

John Thomas McNally was born at Hope River, Prince Edward Island on June 24th, 1871. A graduate of Prince of Wales College in his native province, he later attended Ottawa University. From Ottawa he entered the Canadian College in Rome and from there, with a Doctorate in Philosophy and Theology, was ordained a priest in 1896 at Saint John Lateran by Cardinal Cassetta. During his studies his friend and classmate was Eugenio Pacelli, later to become Pope Pius XII.

He served as curate for two years at St. Patricks in Ottawa and in 1900 went to Portland, Oregon for reasons of health. In 1905 he returned to central Canada and became parish priest at Old Chelsea, Que. and in 1911, came here. Shortly after he arrived, he began a re-decorating project. Under the direction of Perry Clement and with the aid of a famous European artist, Johanne Orlar, the church was repainted inside. The frescoes over the side altars and the Stations of the Cross were painted at this time. (In recent years they were cleaned and restored by Peter van Rossum) Mr. Clement, now in his 84th year, recalls how the work was done and how 40 years later, he was to remove and rebuild much of the work he did under Father McNally's direction.

It was in Father McNally's time that Doctor Lynch died and the priest was succesful in persuading his friend, Doctor John Dunn to give up his practise in Elgin, Otario and come to Almonte. Not only did the good doctor assume the medical practise, but to the end of his long life, was active in the affairs of St. Mary's church and school, as Dr. Lynch had been.

Canada was rapidly growing, and though the First World War was looming it did not deter to pioneers. Settlers were flocking to the west and daily the local papers noted auction sales and the departure of whole families. Many a harvest excursionist came home with glowing reports, collected his bride and returned to a western homestead. The church is in her people and it went with them. The western church needed a bishop. In May, 1913 Father John McNally left us to become the first Bishop of Calgary.

Physically and intellectually he was ready for the challenge. He plated the roots of the church firmly in Alberta. In his time he established forty parishes in his diocese. In 1924 he was appointed Bishop of Hamilton, Ontario and in June 1937 became the seventh Archbishop of Halifax. He was Metropolitan of Nova Scotia, Price Edward Island and Bermuda until his death at the age of 81 in October 1950.



**Monsignor Walter E. Cavanagh (1913—1931)**

With the departure of Reverend Doctor McNally, we find the names of several delegated priests, many of them native sons, who served until the appointment of Father Walter Eugene Cavanagh, then at St. Michaels, Corkery, was confirmed. We read the names of Fathers M. O'Neill, H.E. Letang, August Stanton and Patrick Cokery.

Father Cavanagh's first entry in the Register is the baptism of Catherine Helen Byrne in the spring of 1913. He fought long and hard for Catholic education and encouraged the Sisters of St. Joseph who had just arrived in town. In 1922 he officially opened the present convent for them.

He was constantly occupied with all phases of parish life and the welfare of his flock. He wrote many articles on the moral problems of his times and strove to get a better tax break for separate schools. He was deeply attached to his ancestral Ireland. Home rule and independence found a staunch champion in him. There is yet remembered many a humorous anecdote about him, for he had, despite an apparent gruffness, a keen sense of humour. In his time, St. Mary's had a carriage shed close to where Mr. John Geuer's home is now. Father was a frugal man and in addition to his own chickens and buggy horse, he kept a cow and a pig. The horse was called Nero, the cow, Virgilla and the pig was known as Cromwell.

The 8th day of December, 1919, the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, the patronal feast of our parish, was a day to be remembered. It was the Golden Jubilee of St. Mary's stone church. A solemn high mass was sung at 10 a.m. with His Grace, Archbishop Gauthier on the throne. The celebrant was Father Thomas Patrick Fay, a native son. He was assisted by Father Loferrier, O.P. of the Dominican Novitiate as deacon and Father D. Carey, a native of Ireland and a graduate of the China Mission College, Almonte as sub-deacon. The Right Reverend Doctor McNally, Bishop of Calgary preached the sermon. In the evening, after the Rosary and Litany, Father Dooner of Calabogie preached. His Grace the Archbishop unveiled a brass tablet in memory of the priests who had served St. Mary's since 1823. This was followed by Solemn Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament by the Bishop, assisted by Father O'Neill of Richmond and Father Harris of Ottawa, both of whom had been curates here. Special guests were Father Brownrigg of Pakenham, Father O'Toole of Cantley, Father P.R. Burke of Fitzroy Harbour, Fathers Carroll and William O'Toole of the China Mission College.

Father Cavanagh was raised to the dignity of Domestic Prelate on the 10th of December, 1930. The Papal Bull announcing his appointment read in part — Walter Eugene Cavanagh, V.F. P.P. of this beloved and historic parish of the Holy Name of Mary was this day invested with the dignity of Domestic Prelate by His Grace Archbishop William L. Forbes, D.D. of Ottawa. . . . Many hundreds of friends came and Father Cavanagh offered a special mass of thanksgiving.

Monsignor Cavanagh retired from the active ministry shortly after making a visit to Rome and he spent the few remaining years of his life at Richmond.



**Rev. George W. O'Toole (1931—1937)**

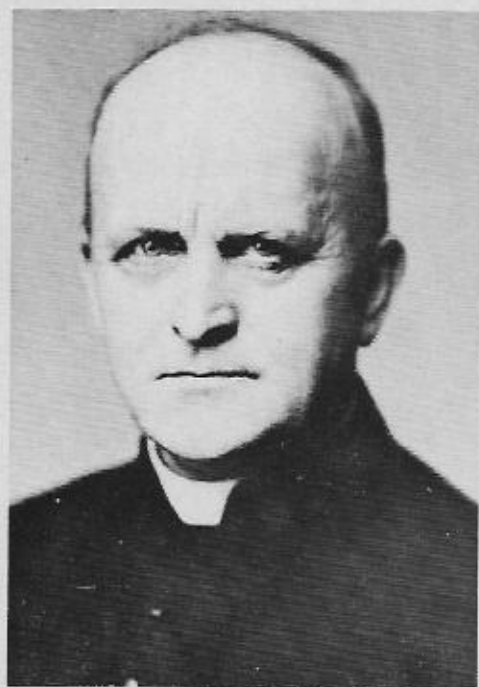
The entries in the handwriting of this beloved priest, from his first record in the autumn of 1931 to his last on the 2nd of July 1937 tell little of the impact of his ministry here. The great good he did is witnessed in the upstanding fathers and mothers of the present generation who were then children. By their memories of him we can call him truly the "boys friend." Father George O'Toole served as parish priest at Cantley, Quinnville and Pakenham before coming to Almonte. He took a great interest in the affairs of young people and especially in organized sport. There is in this little book a photo of him surrounded by his hockey team. Many middle aged parishioners remember his Hudson Straight Eight automobile that was always overflowing with young people. Many were the jaunts and outings he took them on after school and in summer's freedom.

He left Almonte to become pastor of St. Mary's in Ottawa in 1937. He is again remembered there for his leadership of the young and he was ever to be found in their midst. In the last years of his life he suffered a great loss — the burning of his church. He did not live to see it rebuilt. The Ottawa newspapers carried the mournful account of his funeral on November 7th, 1949.

While in Almonte, he watched carefully for signs of a vocation and his encouragement and financial assistance brought several young men to God's Holy Altar. His pastorate was during the height of the great depression and his charity was extended to all, including the nameless who "rode the rods."



It is told how he provided seed potatoes to the poor to help them survive those years. Dave Laforce built an eighteen foot boat for the priest. Whenever a group of boys "had nothing to do" he would take them to the "Vale of Evoca" a pleasant spot on the river behind Hugh Grace's farm and let them fish. Not only was it fun, it was welcome fare for a bare table.



**Very Rev. Canon John Cunningham, V.F. (1937—1952)**

Father Cunningham was a native of the Ottawa Valley. Perfectly bilingual, he had a French speaking parish and also attended South March before coming to Almonte. His was a delayed vocation and he had experience in the lumber business, drove horses on a scraper on the old Solange Canal, and on the Ottawa Electric Railway before taking his vows.

The first Register entry in his beautiful handwriting is the baptism of Earle Francis Leclaire. The final one is a sad one and is signed by his Bishop. Father Cunningham died at the age of seventy-seven, on November 7th, 1952 and is the only one of our parish priests interred in St. Mary's cemetery.

The years of his pastorate were difficult ones, from the end of the depression and through the Second World War. The war brought many sorrows to the town and the tragic train wreck here in 1942. Father Cunningham is remembered fondly and though most of his old friends have passed on, the stories of the great euchre games he played are still remembered. Mr. P.J. Scisson recalls that he was a member of a group of men who played

four hand euchre, with the loser dropping out after each game. The games could begin anytime and ended when duty called. They were played in a cloud of smoke from Father's pipe, at the rectory, Doctor Dunn's or Jack Hourigan's house. The players were Dr. Dunn, Jack Hourigan, Jack Cullen, William McGrath, Frank Burke, Charlie Liberty, Jack Joss, Mickey Coderre, Pat Rooney, Frank Hourigan, John Lyons, George Hourigan, Harry Walker, Pat Rooney, Billy Egan and Billy Roach.

As age began to slow him, we find the names of numerous curates and assistants — Fathers Raymond Burke, Liebers, Dodge and Fiore. Father Dominic Fiore remained in charge of the parish from the death of Father Cunningham to the appointment of Father Maurice Egan in January 1953.



**Reverend W. Maurice Egan (1953—1959)**

Father Maurice Egan was born on the family farm in Huntley Township. His parents, William John Egan and Margaret Kennedy farmed the land his grandfather settled on as Irish immigrants in the 1860's. Educated at St. Michaels Separate School, he attended high school in Almonte and Ottawa. He also took his priestly training in Ottawa where he was ordained on 7 June 1941. He served as curate at Assumption Parish in Vanier City (then Eastview), at St. Margaret Mary and at St. Mary's in Ottawa as well. As curate at St. Mary's he worked with Father George W. O'Toole (our pastor 1931—1937) and shared his grief at the burning of the church there.

Almonte was his first parish and Father Egan was a builder. The modern school that replaced the old frame building is his monument. It was built to be added to when necessary, and this has been done by both of his successors.

He was also a renovator, and he, together with earnest men like Fred Larose and Perry Clement and the enthusiasm of the parishioners commenced the job of completely redoing the inside of the church and replacing the furnishings. This immense job was still in progress in 1959 when his Bishop asked him to go to Gatineau Mills, Quebec and start a new parish for English speaking Catholics there. His old friend, Father Francis French shouldered the task and Father Maurice began the building of St. Aloysius, his present church.

Father Egan's pastorate here began with an entry in the Register marking the baptism of Debre Jean McDonald and his final entries note the baptisms of John Edward Vaughan and Murray John McPhail. His six years here were years of fruitful change. They marked the beginning of a new era of prosperity. Almonte saw a great shift in population and it became home to many people who work in Ottawa. All were welcomed to St. Mary's by their friend and pastor. It was during his time here that many of the great men and women who sustained the church at the end of the last century passed to Glory. In 1957, assisted by his boyhood friend, Father Wilfred Scott, OMI, Father Egan conducted the funeral service for Father Francis Corkery, a descendant of the pioneers of 1823. He was 71 years of age and was laid to rest in St. Mary's cemetery.

Father Egan often returns to visit here and at Corkery, where his brothers Michael and Patrick still live. The tang of late autumn woods, the cry of the hounds when they raise a deer still excite him.



**Rev. Francis French (1959—1966)**

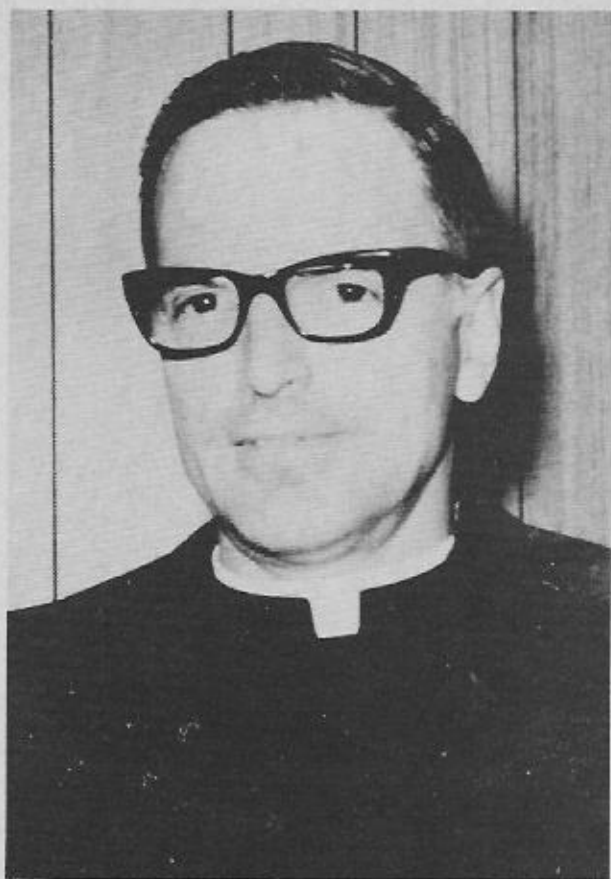
When in May, 1959, Rev. Father Francis French replaced Father Egan as parish priest here, he did not come as a stranger. He had been a neighbour as priest at Fitzroy Harbour and had often been to St. Mary's. Father French

was born in Edmonton, but is really a native son of the Ottawa Valley. His father, Dr. Felix French was born in Renfrew and his mother, Martha Brennan, in Arnprior. He was educated at St. Patricks High School in Ottawa and St. Augustines Seminary in Toronto. He was ordained in 1944 and celebrated his first Holy Mass at Blessed Sacrement church in Ottawa. He served at the latter church and at St. Georges as curate before going to Fitzroy Harbour.

On arrival in Almonte he continued with the help of Fred Larose and Perry Clement, to modernize and redecorate the church. With his boundless enthusiasm and sincerity, he soon made many friends, both within the parish and with all the townspeople. He was an organizer and he inspired others with his confidence. The energy he expended on the new hospital, the credit union movement and other worthy causes will not soon be forgotten. An important event in his pastorate was the founding of a Council of the Knights of Columbus in our parish. It was named the Dr. Dunn Council in memory of a great and revered country doctor in our district who had come here with Father McNally. The Grand Knight of the first Council was Michael Rooney. One of the first acts of the Council was to offer an annual plaque and prize for Canadian history to St. Mary's school in the name of George Tasker, a World War I veteran, who was for many years caretaker of the school and church.

The hungry always found a place at "Father Frank's" table and the drunkard kindly reproach and direction. His time was freely given. For seven years his name was a household word. In October, 1966, with regret we learned that our Bishop had another job for him. Today the beautiful church of Holy Cross, its school, hall and rectory in the growing south of Ottawa attest to his energy and organizational ability.

In May, 1969, on the 25th anniversary of his ordination, a great throng of friends and clergy called on him to extend their wishes and prayers that he will have many more years in the service of Christ who animates our lives.



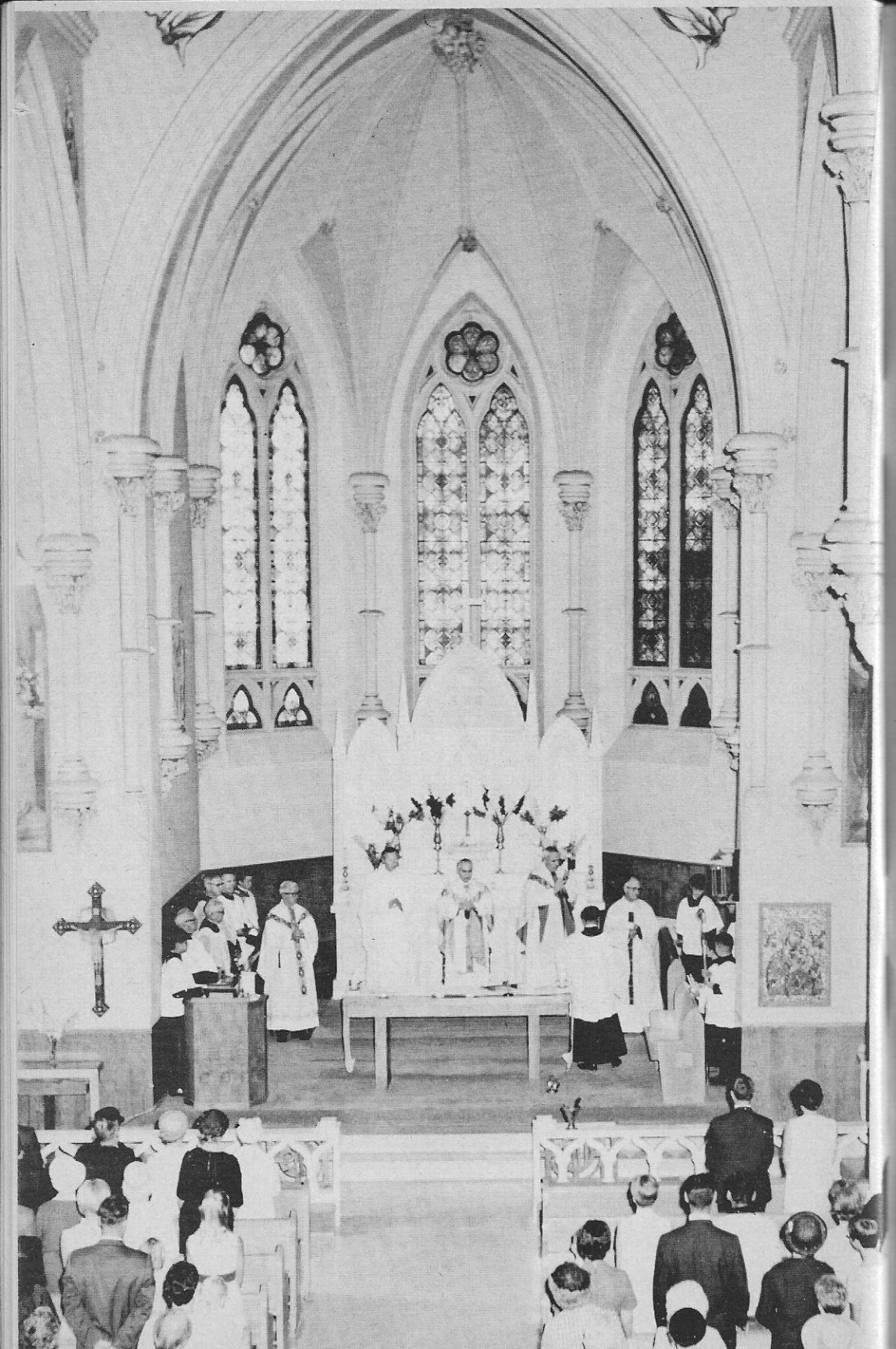
**Rev. John O'Donnell (1966-1969)**

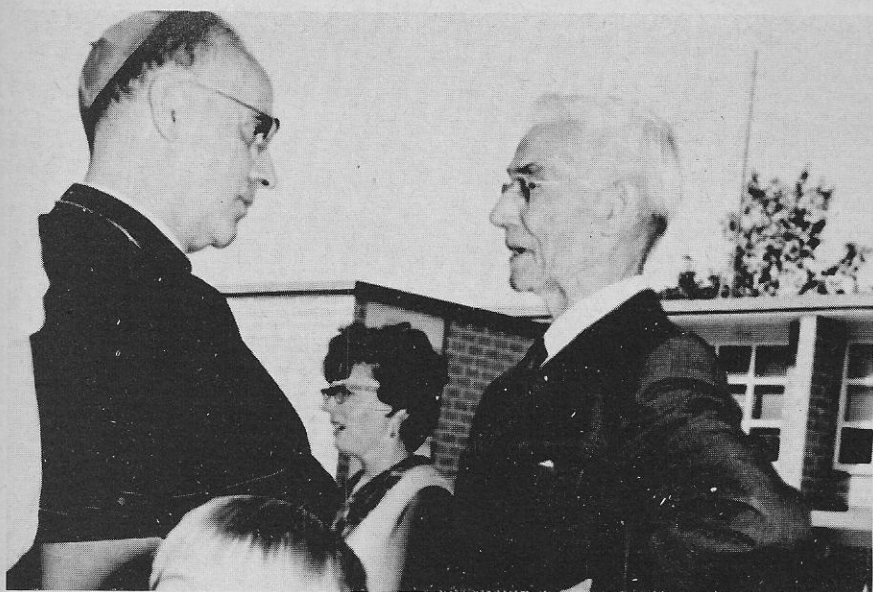
Father John O'Donnell succeeded Father French here in 1966 and it fell to him to implement many of the changes in liturgy and parish management brought about by the Second Vatican Council. They were difficult years, but he left our parish with flourishing lay councils, a great new addition to the school and major repairs to the church, in September 1969, a few days before we began our centennial celebrations.

**Rev. Edward Lunney (1969-**

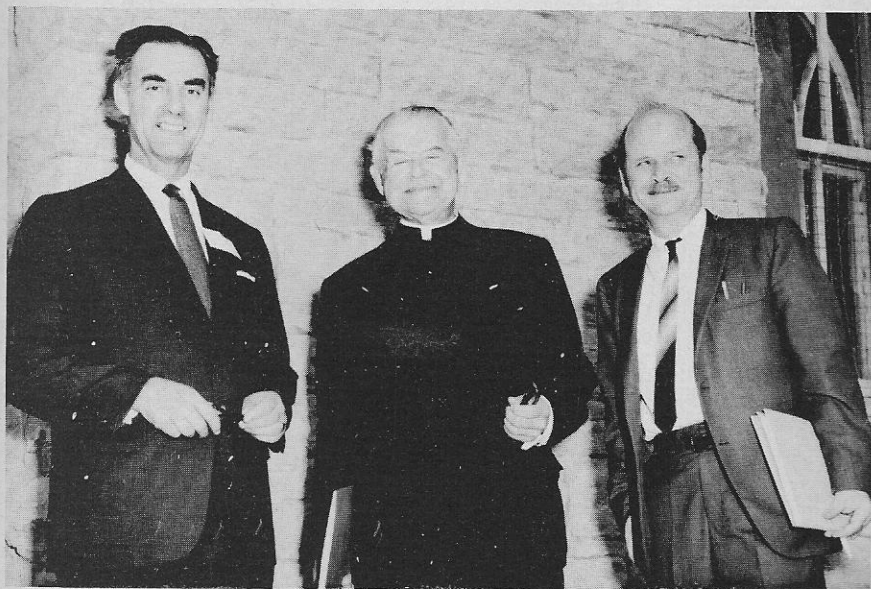
Father Lunney has always been a neighbour. He was born in Pakenham and attended schools in Kinburn, Pakenham and Arnprior before earning his B.A. at Ottawa University. He was trained for the Holy Priesthood at St. Augustines in Toronto and was ordained in 1955. He served in many of the same parishes as some of our former pastors — Our Lady of Perpetual Help, St. Margaret Mary's and St. Theresa's and from 1966 at St. Patrick's in Fallowfield.





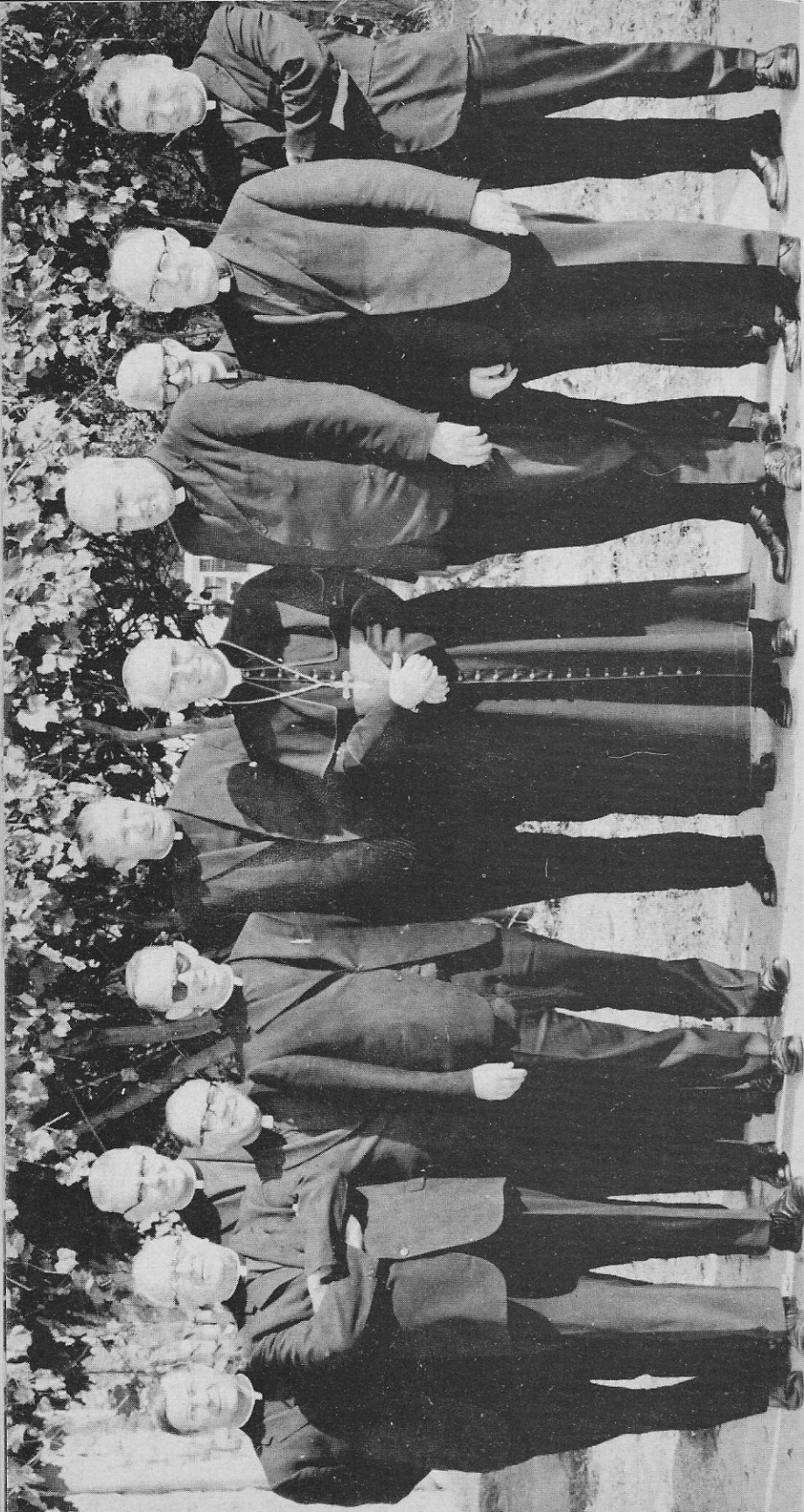


His Excellency Archbishop Plourde with Mr. E.P. Clement, who twice in his life remodelled the interior of St. Mary's.



Mr. J.P. Dunn, Chairman of the 1969 Centennial Committee, Monsignor J.A. McDonagh, nepotal descendant of our second pastor and first builder, John Hugh McDonagh, and James McNeill, author of this history. Monsignor McDonagh was a special guest on Sept. 14th, and gave an eloquent talk on the state of the church one hundred years ago.

◁ Concelebration September 14, 1969.



Grouped with His Excellency, Archbishop Plourde are visiting clergy, former pastors and friends who attended the Sept. 14th, 1969 gathering and concelebration of the Mass. From left to right are: Fr. Huneault, Msgr. Lesage, Fr. Murphy, Fr. Levesque, Fr. Gahagan, Fr. French (former pastor) His Excellency, Fr. Lunney (just appointed pastor) Fr. Egan (former pastor) and Fr. Victor Skiliundzunais.

